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**CONVERSATIONS**

OF

**LORD BYRON.**

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JOURNAL  
OF THE  
**CONVERSATIONS**  
OF  
**LORD BYRON.**

NOTED DURING A RESIDENCE WITH HIS LORDSHIP  
AT PISA,  
IN THE YEARS 1821 AND 1822.

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BY THOMAS MEDWIN, ESQ.

OF THE 24<sup>TH</sup> LIGHT DRAGOONS.

AUTHOR OF "AHASUERUS THE WANDERER."

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VOL. I.

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PARIS :

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALIGNANI,

AT THE FRENCH, ENGLISH, ITALIAN, GERMAN, AND SPANISH  
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## PREFACE.

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“ A GREAT poet belongs to no country ; his works are public property, and his Memoirs the inheritance of the public.” Such were the sentiments of Lord Byron ; and have they been attended to ? Has not a manifest injustice been done to the world, and an injury to his memory, by the destruction of his Memoirs ? These are questions which it is now late, perhaps needless, to ask ; but I will endeavour to lessen, if not to remedy, the evil.

I am aware that in publishing these reminiscences I shall have to contend with much obloquy from some parts of his family,—that I shall incur the animosity of many of his friends.

There are authors, too, who will not be pleased to find their names in print,—to hear his real opinion of themselves, or of their works. There are others——But I have the satisfaction of feeling that I have set about executing the task I have undertaken, conscientiously : I mean neither to throw a veil over his errors, nor a gloss over his virtues.

My sketch will be an imperfect and a rough one, it is true, but it will be from the life ; and slight as it is, may prove more valuable, perhaps, than a finished drawing from memory. It will be any thing but a panegyric : my aim is to paint him as he was. That his passions were violent and impetuous, cannot be denied ; but his feelings and affections were equally strong. Both demanded continual employment ; and he had an impatience of repose, a “ restlessness of rest,” that kept them in constant activity. It is satisfactory too, at least it is some consolation, to



reflect, that the last energies of his nature were consumed in the cause of liberty, and for the benefit of mankind.

How I became acquainted with so many particulars of his history, so many incidents of his life, so many of his opinions, is easily explained. They were communicated during a period of many months' familiar intercourse, without any injunctions to secrecy, and committed to paper for the sake of reference only. They have not been shewn to any one individual, and but for the fate of his MS. would never have appeared before the public.

I despise mere writing for the sake of book-making, and have disdained to swell out my materials into volumes. I have given Lord Byron's ideas as I noted them down at the time,—in his own words, as far as my recollection served.

They are, however, in many cases, the substance without the form. The brilliancy of his wit, the flow of his eloquence, the sallies of his imagination, who could do justice to? His voice, his manner, which gave a charm to the whole, who could forget?

“ His subtle talk would cheer the winter night,  
And make me know myself; and the fire-light  
Would flash upon our faces, till the day  
Might dawn, and make me wonder at my stay.”

Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo*.

GENEVA, 1st August, 1824.

# CONTENTS TO VOL. I.

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	PAGE.
The Writer's arrival at Pisa. Lord Byron's live stock and <i>impedimenta</i> . The Lanfranchi palace ; Ugolino ; Lanfranchi's ghost. English Cerberus. Lord B.'s Leporello ; bas reliefs and mantel-pieces	1 — 2
Introduction to Lord Byron. His cordiality of manner. Description of his person ; his bust by Bertolini ; the <i>cloven</i> foot ; his temperate habits, and regard for the brute creation. Conversations on Switzerland and Germany ; strong predilection for Turkey .....	2 — 9
Residence at Geneva. Malicious intruders. Madame de Staël. Dinner disaster. Excursions on the lake ; Shelley and Hobhouse : St. Preux and Julia ; classical drowning. Lord Byron's horsemanship ; pistol-firing ; remarks on duelling ; his own duels. Anecdote.....	9 — 14
Sunset at Venice and Pisa. Routine of Lord Byron's life. The Countess Guiccioli : Lord Byron's attachment to her ; beautiful Sonnet and Stanzas in honour of her. <i>Cavalieri Serventi</i> . Mode of bringing up Italian females ; its consequences. Italian propensity to love. Intimacy with the Countess : her rescue .....	15 — 24

Lord Byron's preference for Ravenna. Female beauty in Italy and England compared. The Constitutionalists; their proscription. Lord Byron's danger. Assassination of the military Commandant at Ravenna. Lord B.'s humanity.....	24—29
The Byron Memoirs: Mr. Moore, Lady Burghersh, and Lady Byron. Lord B.'s opinion of his own Memoirs; his marriage and separation. Mrs. Williams, the English Sybil. An omen. Lord B.'s introduction to Miss Millbank; his courtship and marriage .....	29—33
The wedding-ring. An uneasy ride. The honeymoon. Lord and Lady B.'s fashionable dissipation; consequent embarrassment; final separation. Lord B.'s prejudices respecting women. Family Jars; Mrs. Charlemont. Domestic felony. Mrs. Mardyn. Statute of lunacy. Lady Noel's hatred. Anecdote.....	34—43
Lady Byron's abilities. Lord B.'s various <i>counterparts</i> . "The Examiner" and Lady Jersey. Sale of Newstead Abbey; departure from England.....	43—46
Madame de Staël and Goëthe. Lord B.'s partiality for America; curious specimen of American criticism. The 'Sketches of Italy.' Lord B.'s life at Venice; further remarks on his Memoirs	46—50
Anecdotes of himself and companions; Lord Falkland. Lord B.'s presentiments; early horror of matrimony; anti-matrimonial wager. Anecdotes of his father. Craniology. Anecdote of his uncle. Early love for Scotland; Mary C—. Harrow School; Duke of Dorset; Lords Clare and Calthorpe; school rebellion.....	50—60

'The hours of Idleness.' The skull goblet; a new order established at Newstead. Julia Alpinula. Skulls from the field of Morat. 'Lord B.'s contempt of academic honours; his bear; the ourang-outang. A lady in masquerade. Mrs. L. G.'s depravity. Singular occurrence. Comparison of English and Italian profligacy.....	60—67
Fashionable pastimes; Hell in St. James's Street; chicken-hazard. Scroope Davies, and Lord B.'s pistols; the deodand. Lord B. commences his travels. His opinion of Venice. His own and Napoleon's opinion of women. The new Fornarina; Harlowe the painter. Gallantry sometimes dangerous at Venice.....	67—74
Lord Byron's religious opinions; his scepticism only occasional. English Cathedral Service. Religion of Tasso and Milton. Missionary Societies, and missions to the East. <i>Tentazione di Sant' Antonio</i> . Tacitus; Priestley and Wesley. Dying moments of Johnson, Cowper, Hume, Voltaire, and Creech. Sale. Anything-arians; Gibbon. Plato's three principles. Lord B.'s correspondents; ecstatic epistolary extract. Prayer for Lord B.'s conversion; his avowal of being a Christian .....	74—83
Ali Pacha's barbarity. Affecting tale. Real incident in 'The Giaour.' Albanian guards. The Doctor in alarm. Lord Byron's ghost. He prophesies that he shall die in Greece. Lord Byron and the Drury Lane Committee. Theatricals. Obstacles to writing for the stage. Kemble; Mrs. Siddons; Munden; Shakspeare; Alfieri; Maturin; Miss	

Baillie. Modern sensitiveness. ‘Marino Faliero.’	
Ugo Foscolo.....	84-100
Ada. Singular coincidence. Ideas on education.	
Ada’s birth-day. Lord Byron’s melancholy and superstition. Birth-day fatalities. Death of Polidori. ‘The Vampyre’—foundation of the story Lord Byron’s; ‘Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus.’ Query to Sir Humphrey Davy. Scott, Rousseau, and Goëthe. Fulfilment of Mrs. Williams’s prophecy. Unlucky numbers.....	100-101
Lord Byron’s epigrams. His hospitality. Advances towards a reconciliation with Lady Byron. Death of Lady Noel. Lord Byron’s remarks on lyric poetry; Coleridge, Moore, and Campbell. Ode on Sir John Moore’s funeral.....	101-119
Swimming across the Hellespont. Adventures at Brighton and Venice. ‘Marino Faliero’ and ‘The two Foscari.’ Hogg the Ettrick Shepherd’s prediction. Failure of ‘Marino Faliero.’ Lord Byron’s epigram on the occasion. Louis Dix-huit’s translation: Jeffrey’s critique. Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews. Subjects for tragedies.....	119-130
Barry Cornwall. ‘Cain.’ Gessner’s ‘Death of Abel.’ Hobhouse’s opinion of ‘Cain.’ Lord B.’s defence of that poem. Goëthe’s ‘Faust.’ Letter to Murray respecting ‘Cain.’ Bacchanalian song. Private theatricals. The <i>Definite Article</i> . A Play proposed. The Guiccioli’s <i>Veto</i> . ....	130-143
Merits of actors. Dowton and Kean. Kean’s Richard the Third and Sir Giles Overreach. Garrick’s dressing of Othello. Kemble’s costume; his Coriolanus and Cato: his colloquial blank verse.	

# CONTENTS.

V

PAGE.

Improvisatori : Theodore Hook : Sgricci ; his 'Iphigenia.' Mrs. Siddons and Miss O'Neill. The elephant's legs. Stage courtship. Lamb's Specimens. Plagiarisms. 'Faust'.....	143-151
Lord Byron's 'Hours of Idleness.' The ineffectual potation. Severity of Reviewers. 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' Jeffrey and Moore. Moore's challenge to Lord Byron ; miscarriage of the letter ; subsequent friendship. Character of Southey.....	151-157
Mr. Southey's letter in 'The Literary Gazette.' Lord Byron's anxiety and anger. 'Vision of Judgment.' Southey's critique on 'Foliage.' Shelley's <i>Atëos</i> 'The Deformed Transformed : ' Shelley's opinion thereon. Southey's epitaph. 'Heaven and Earth :' Murray's refusal to print. 'Cain,' and the Lord Chancellor. 'Loves of the Angels' and 'Lalla Rookh.' Projected completion of 'Heaven and Earth.' 'The Prophecy of Dante.' Italian en- thusiasm in favour of Dante .....	157-172
Shelley's opinion that the study of Dante is unfavour- able to writing : the difficulty of translating him : Taaffe and Cary. Lord Byron and 'The Pro- phesy of Dante.' Swedenborg's disciples. Trans- lations of Lord Byron's works. The greatest com- pliment ever paid him. Milton and the cat's back. Milton and Shakspeare <i>redivivi</i> . Lord Byron's opinion of 'Childe Harold,' and the inequality of his writings. Epics. Southey's 'Joan of Arc ;' 'Curse of Kehama.' 'Don Juan' and the Iliad. Dr. Johnson's censorship defied. Intended plan of 'Don Juan : ' adventures and death of the hero	172-178

Murray's plea : the Cookery-book his sheet-anchor : real cause of his anxiety for Lord Byron's fame. Douglas Kinnaird's friendship. Murray's offer for 'Don Juan,' per Canto. Piracy of 'Don Juan,' and its cause. The bishops. Murray's dislike to Shelley. Price given for Third Canto of 'Childe Harold' 'Manfred' and 'The Prisoner of 'Chillon'	178-182
The 'Quarterly Review' and its bullies. A literary set-to. Murray and Galignani. Murray's purchase of 'Cain,' 'The Two Foscari,' and 'Sardanapalus.' The deed. Reconciliation with Murray. 'Cain,' and the Anti-constitutional Society. Murray, Lord Byron, and the 'Navy List.' Last book of Lord Byron's published by Murray. Opening fire of 'The Quarterly.' 'The Wanderer.' Cole- ridge's 'Christabel,' and Scott's 'Metrical Tales.' Sir W. Scott's talents at recitation. An English October day. Unconscious plagiarism. 'Kubla Khan.' Madame de Staël. Coleridge's Memoirs. Grammont. Alfieri's Life, and Lord B's Confes- sion. Coleridge's want of identity. Poets in 1795	182-189
Intended <i>Auto da fé</i> . Priestly charity. Duchess of Lucca. Lord Guilford. Grand Duke of Tus- cany. Intended rescue; escape of the victim. Madame de Staël and the opposition leaders in Eng- land : her <i>ultraisms</i> . Brummell. Reported double marriage; Baron Auguste and Miss Millbank ; Lord B. and the Duchess of Broglie. Madame de Staël's conversational powers. Glenarvon. Madame de Staël's amiable heart. Women, and Opera figurantes : <i>pirouetting</i> common to both. Napo- leon and Madame de Staël. Lord B.'s opinion of	



# CONTENTS.

vii

PAGE.

Napoleon and of his exit. Madame de Staël's historical omission. Rocca .....	190-198
Complaint against the East India Company. Lord B.'s liberality. Balloons and Horace. Steam. Philosophical system. Romances. Lewis's 'Monk : ' its ground-work. Secret of Walter Scott's inspiration. 'The Bleeding Nun.' Ghost stories : the haunted room at Manheim ; Mina and the passing-bell. Lewis and Matthias. 'Abellino.' 'Pizarro' and Sheridan. 'The Castle Spectre' in Drury Lane. Lord B.'s sketch of Sheridan. The age of companionability. Monk Lewis and his brother's ghost. Madame de Staël, Lewis, and the Slave Trade. A fatal emetic.....	198-208
Imputed plagiarisms. A dose of Wordsworth's physic. Shelley's admiration of Wordsworth. Peter Bell's ass, and the family circle. The Republican trio. Comparisons. The Botany Bay Eclogue, the Panegyric of Martin the Regicide. and 'Wat Tyler,' <i>versus</i> the Laureate odes and the Waterloo eulogium. The <i>par nobili</i> mortally wounded. Hogg the Ettrick Shepherd's 'Poetic Mirror.' The 'Rejected Addresses.' Bowles : Coleridge's praise of him inexplicable. Bowles's good fellowship : his Madeira woods. Pope's Letters to Martha Blount. The evil attending a <i>punnable</i> name. Lord B.'s partiality to Johnson's Lives of the Poets. No monument to Pope in Poet's Corner : the reason. Milton's name in jeopardy. Voltaire's tomb blocked up. Identity of a great poet and a religious man maintained.....	208-214



# CONVERSATIONS,

ETC.

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I WENT to Italy late in the autumn of 1821 for the benefit of my health. Lord Byron, accompanied by Mr. Rogers as far as Florence, had passed on a few days before me, and was already at Pisa when I arrived.

His travelling equipage was rather a singular one, and afforded a strange catalogue for the *Dogana* : seven servants, five carriages, nine horses, a monkey, a bull-dog and mastiff, two cats, three pea-fowls and some hens, (I do not know whether I have classed them in order of rank,) formed part of his live stock ; these, and all his books, consisting of a very large library of modern works,

(for he bought all the best that came out,) together with a vast quantity of furniture, might well be termed, with Cæsar, "impediments."

I had long formed a wish to see and be acquainted with Lord Byron; but his known refusal at that time to receive the visits of strangers, even of some who had brought him letters of introduction from the most intimate friend he had, and a prejudice excited against his own countrymen by a late insult, would have deterred me from seeking an interview with him, had not the proposal come from himself, in consequence of his hearing Shelley speak of me.

20th NOVEMBER.—"This is the Lung' Arno: he has hired the Lanfranchi palace for a year. It is one of those marble piles that seem built for eternity, whilst the family whose name it bears no longer exists," said Shelley, as we entered a hall that seemed built for giants. "I remember the lines in the *Inferno*," said I: "a Lanfranchi was one of the persecutors of Ugolino." "The same," answered Shelley; "you will see a picture of Ugo-

lino and his sons in his room. Fletcher, his valet, is as superstitious as his master, and says the house is haunted, so that he cannot sleep for rumbling noises overhead, which he compares to the rolling of bowls. No wonder; old Lanfranchi's ghost is unquiet, and walks at night."

The palace was of such size, that Lord Byron only occupied the first floor; and at the top of the staircase leading to it was the English bull-dog, whose chain was long enough to guard the door, and prevent the entrance of strangers; he, however, knew Shelley, growled, and let us pass. In the ante-room we found several servants in livery, and Fletcher, (whom Shelley mentioned, and of whom I shall have occasion to speak,) who had been in his service from the time he left Harrow. "Like many old servants, he is a privileged person," whispered Shelley. "Don Juan had not a better Leporello, for imitating his master. He says that he is a Laurel struck by a *Metre*, and when in Greece remarked upon one of the bas-reliefs of the Parthenon, 'La! what mantel-pieces these would make, my Lord!'" When we were an-

nounced, we found his Lordship writing. His reception was frank and kind; he took me cordially by the hand and said :

“ You are a relation and schoolfellow of Shelley’s—we do not meet as strangers—you must allow me to continue my letter on account of the post. Here’s something for you to read, Shelley, giving him part of his MS. of ‘ Heaven and Earth;’ tell me what you think of it.”

During the few minutes that Lord Byron was finishing his letter, I took an opportunity of narrowly observing him, and drawing his portrait in my mind.\* Thorwaldsen’s bust is too thin-necked and young for Lord Byron. None of the

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\* Being with him day after day, some time afterwards, whilst he was sitting to Bertolini, the Florentine sculptor, for his bust, I had an opportunity of analyzing his features more critically, but found nothing to alter in my portrait. Bertolini’s is an admirable likeness, at least was so in the clay model. I have not seen it since it was copied in marble, nor have I got a cast; he promised Bertolini should send me

engravings gave me the least idea of him. I saw a man of about five feet seven or eight, apparently forty years of age : as was said of Milton, he barely escaped being short and thick. His face was fine, and the lower part symmetrically moulded; for the lips and chin had that curved and definite outline that distinguishes Grecian beauty. His forehead was high, and his temples broad; and he had a paleness in his complexion, almost to wanness. His hair, thin and fine, had almost become grey, and waved in natural and graceful curls over his head, that was assimilating itself fast to the "bald first Cæsar's." He allowed it to grow longer behind than it is accustomed to be worn, and at that time had mustachios, which

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one. Lord Byron prided himself on his neck; and it must be confessed that his head was worthy of being placed on it. Bertolini destroyed his *ébauches* more than once before he could please himself. When he had finished, Lord Byron said,

"It is the last time I sit to sculptor or painter."

This was on the 4th of January, 1822.

were not sufficiently dark to be becoming. In criticising his features it might, perhaps, be said that his eyes were placed too near his nose, and that one was rather smaller than the other; they were of a greyish brown, but of a peculiar clearness, and when animated possessed a fire which seemed to look through and penetrate the thoughts of others, while they marked the inspirations of his own. His teeth were small, regular, and white; these, I afterwards found, he took great pains to preserve.\*

I expected to discover that he had a club, perhaps a *cloven*, foot; but it would have been difficult to have distinguished one from the other, either in size or in form.

On the whole, his figure was manly, and his countenance handsome and prepossessing, and

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\* For this purpose he used tobacco when he first went into the open air; and he told me he was in the habit of grinding his teeth in his sleep, to prevent which he was forced to put a napkin between them.



very expressive; and the familiar ease of his conversation soon made me perfectly at home in his society. Our first interview was marked with a cordiality and confidence that flattered while it delighted me; and I felt anxious for the next day, in order that I might repeat my visit.

When I called on his Lordship at two o'clock, he had just left his bed-room, and was at breakfast, if it can be called one. It consisted of a cup of strong green tea, without milk or sugar, and an egg, of which he ate the yolk raw. I observed the abstemiousness of his meal.

“My digestion is weak; I am too bilious,” said he, “to eat more than once a-day, and generally live on vegetables. To be sure, I drink two bottles of wine at dinner, but they form only a vegetable diet. Just now I live on claret and soda-water. You are just come from Geneva, Shelley tells me. I passed the best part of the summer of 1816 at the Campagna Diodati, and was very nearly passing this last there. I went so far as to write to Hentsh the banker;

“ but Shelley, when he came to visit me at Ravenna, gave me such a flattering account of Pisa that I changed my mind. Then it is troublesome to travel so far with so much live and dead stock as I do; and I don’t like to leave behind me any of my pets that have been accumulating since I came on the Continent. \* One cannot trust to strangers to take care of them. You will see at the farmer’s some of my peafowls *en pension*. Fletcher tells me that they are almost as bad fellow-travellers as the monkey,† which I will shew you. ”

Here he led the way to a room, where, after playing with and caressing the creature for some time, he proposed a game of billiards.

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\* He says afterwards in “Don Juan,” Canto X, Stanza 50,

—————“ He had a kind of inclination, or  
Weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin,  
Live animals.”

† He afterwards bought another monkey in Pisa, in the street, because he saw it ill-used.

I brought the conversation back on Switzerland and his travels, and asked him if he had been in Germany?

“No,” said he, “not even at Trieste. I hate  
“despotism and the Goths too much. I have  
“travelled little on the Continent, at least never  
“gone out of my way. This is partly owing to  
“the indolence of my disposition, partly owing  
“to my incumbrances. I had some idea, when  
“at Rome, of visiting Naples, but was at that  
“time anxious to get back to Venice. But Pæstum cannot surpass the ruins of Agrigentum,  
“which I saw by moonlight; nor Naples, Constantinople. You have no conception of the  
“beauty of the twelve islands where the Turks  
“have their country-houses, or of the blue Symplegades against which the Bosphorus beats  
“with such resistless violence.

“Switzerland is a country I have been satisfied  
“with seeing once; Turkey I could live in for  
“ever. I never forget my predilections. I was  
“in a wretched state of health, and worse spirits,

“ when I was at Geneva ; but quiet and the Lake,  
“ physicians better than Polidori, soon set me up.  
“ I never led so moral a life as during my resi-  
“ dence in that country ; but I gained no credit by  
“ it. Where there is a mortification, there ought  
“ to be reward. On the contrary, there is no story  
“ so absurd that they did not invent at my cost.  
“ I was watched by glasses on the opposite side of  
“ the Lake, and by glasses too that must have had  
“ very distorted optics. I was waylaid in my  
“ evening drives—I was accused of corrupting all  
“ the *grisettes* in the Rue Basse. I believe that  
“ they looked upon me as a man-monster, worse  
“ than the *piqueur*.

“ Somebody possessed Madame de Staël with  
“ an opinion of my immorality. I used occasion-  
“ ally to visit her at Coppet ; and once she invited  
“ me to a family-dinner, and I found the room  
“ full of strangers, who had come to stare at me  
“ as at some outlandish beast in a rareeshow.  
“ One of the ladies fainted, and the rest looked  
“ as if his Satanic Majesty had been among them.  
“ Madame de Staël took the liberty to read me a

“ lecture before this crowd ; to which I only made  
“ her a low bow.

“ I knew very few of the Genevese. Hentsh  
“ was very civil to me ; and I have a great respect  
“ for Sismondi. I was' forced to return the civi-  
“ lities of one of their Professors by asking him,  
“ and an old gentleman, a friend of Gray's, to dine  
“ with me. I had gone out to sail early in the  
“ morning, and the wind prevented me from re-  
“ turning in time for dinner. I understand that I  
“ offended them mortally. Polidori did the ho-  
“ nours.

“ Among our countrymen I made no new ac-  
“ quaintances ; Shelley, Monk Lewis, and Hob-  
“ house were almost the only English people I  
“ saw. No wonder ; I shewed a distaste for so-  
“ ciety at that time, and went little among the  
“ Genevese ; besides, I could not speak French.  
“ What is become of my boatman and boat ? I  
“ suppose she is rotten ; she was never worth  
“ much. When I went the tour of the Lake in  
“ her with Shelley and Hobhouse, she was nearly

“wrecked near the very spot where St. Preux and  
“Julia were in danger of being drowned. It  
“would have been classical to have been lost  
“there, but not so agreeable. Shelley was on  
“the Lake much oftener than I, at all hours of  
“the night and day: he almost lived on it; his  
“great rage is a boat. We are both building  
“now at Genoa, I a yacht, and he an open  
“boat.”

We played at billiards till the carriage was announced, and I accompanied him in his drive. Soon after we got off the stones, we mounted our horses, which were waiting for us. Lord Byron is an admirable horseman, combining grace with the security of his seat. He prides himself much on this exercise. He conducted us for some miles till we came to a farm-house, where he practises pistol-firing every evening. This is his favourite amusement, and may indeed be called almost a pursuit. He always has pistols in his holster, and eight or ten pair by the first makers in London carried by his courier. We had each twelve rounds of ammunition, and in a diameter of four

inches he put eleven out of twelve shots. I observed his hand shook exceedingly. He said that when he first began at Manton's he was the worst shot in the world, and Manton was perhaps the best. The subject turned upon duelling, and he contended for its necessity, and quoted some strong arguments in favour of it.

“I have been concerned,” said he, “in man  
“duels as second, but only in two as principal ;  
“one was with Hobhouse before I became inti-  
“mate with him. The best marksmen at a target  
“are not the surest in the field. Cecil's and  
“Stackpoole's affair proved this. They fought  
“after a quarrel of three years, during which  
“they were practising daily. Stackpoole was so  
“good a shot that he used to cut off the heads of  
“the fowls for dinner as they drank out of the  
“coops about. He had every wish to kill his  
“antagonist, but he received his death-blow from  
“Cecil, who fired rather fine, or rather was the  
“quickest shot of the two. All he said when  
“falling was, ‘D——n it, have I missed him?’  
“Shelley is a much better shot than I am, but

“ he is thinking of metaphysics rather than of firing.”

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I understand that Lord Byron is always in better spirits after having *culpéd* (as he calls it) the targe often, or hit a five-franc piece, the counterpart of which is always given to the farmer, who is making a little fortune. All the pieces struck, Lord Byron keeps to put, as he says, in his museum.

We now continued our ride, and returned to Pisa by the Lucca gate.

“ Pisa with its hanging tower and Sophia-like dome reminds me,” said Lord Byron, “ of an eastern place.”

He then remarked the heavy smoke that rolled away from the city, spreading in the distance a vale of mist, through which the golden clouds of evening appeared.



“It is fine,” said Lord Byron, “but no sunsets are to be compared with those of Venice. They are too gorgeous for any painter; and defy any poet. My rides, indeed, would have been nothing without the Venetian sunsets. Ask Shelley.”

“Stand on the marble bridge,” said Shelley, “cast your eye, if you are not dazzled, on its river glowing as with fire, then follow the graceful curve of the palaces on the Lung’ Arno till the arch is naved by the massy dungeon tower (erroneously called Ugolino’s), frowning in dark relief, and tell me if any thing can surpass a sunset at Pisa.”

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The history of one, is that of almost every day. It is impossible to conceive a more unvaried life than Lord Byron led at this period. I continued to visit him at the same hour daily. Billiards, conversation, or reading, filled up the intervals till it was time to take our evening drive, ride, and pistol-practice. On our return, which was always in the same direction, we frequently met the

Countess Guiccioli, with whom he stopped to converse a few minutes.

He dined at half an hour after sunset (at twenty-four o'clock); then drove to Count Gamba's, the Countess Guiccioli's father, passed several hours in her society, returned to his palace, and either read or wrote till two or three in the morning; occasionally drinking spirits diluted with water as a medicine, from a dread of a nephritic complaint, to which he was, or fancied himself, subject. Such was his life at Pisa.

The Countess Guiccioli is twenty-three years of age, though she appears no more than seventeen or eighteen. Unlike most of the Italian women, her complexion is delicately fair. Her eyes, large, dark, and languishing, are shaded by the longest eyelashes in the world; and her hair, which is ungathered on her head, plays over her falling shoulders in a profusion of natural ringlets of the darkest auburn. Her figure is, perhaps, too much *enbompoint* for her height, but her bust is perfect; her features want little of possessing a Grecian

regularity of outline ; and she has the most beautiful mouth and teeth imaginable. It is impossible to see without admiring—to hear the Guiccioli speak without being fascinated. Her amiability and gentleness shew themselves in every intonation of her voice, which, and the music of her perfect Italian, give a peculiar charm to every thing she utters. Grace and elegance seem component parts of her nature. Notwithstanding that she adores Lord Byron, it is evident that the exile and poverty of her aged father sometimes affect her spirits, and throw a shade of melancholy on her countenance, which adds to the deep interest this lovely girl creates.

“ Extraordinary pains,” said Lord Byron one day, “ were taken with the education of Teresa. “ Her conversation is lively, without being frivolous ; without being learned, she has read all “ the best authors of her own and the French “ language. She often conceals what she knows, “ from the fear of being thought to know too “ much ; possibly because she knows I am not “ fond of blues. To use an expression of Jeffrey’s,

“ ‘ If she has blue stockings, she contrives that  
“ her petticoat shall hide them.’ ”

---

Lord Byron is certainly very much attached to her, without being actually in love. His description of the Georgioni in the Manfrini palace at Venice is meant for the Countess. The beautiful sonnet prefixed to the ‘ Prophecy of Dante ’ was addressed to her ; and I cannot resist copying some stanzas written when he was about to quit Venice to join her at Ravenna, which will describe the state of his feelings at that time.

“ River\* that rollest by the ancient walls  
“ Where dwells the lady of my love, when she  
“ Walks by the brink, and there perchance recalls  
“ A faint and fleeting memory of me :

“ What if thy deep and ample stream should be  
“ A mirror of my heart, where she may read  
“ The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,  
“ Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed ?

---

\* The Po.

- “ What do I say— a mirror of my heart ?  
“ Are not thy waters sweeping, dark and strong ?  
“ Such as my feelings were and are, thou art ;  
“ And such as thou art, were my passions long.
- “ Time may have somewhat tamed them, not for ever ;  
“ Thou overflow’st thy banks, and not for aye ;  
“ Thy bosom overboils, congenial river !  
“ Thy floods subside ; and mine have sunk away—
- “ But left long wrecks behind them, and again  
“ Borne on our old unchanged career, we move ;  
“ Thou tendest wildly onward to the main,  
“ And I to loving *one* I should not love.
- “ The current I behold will sweep beneath  
“ Her native walls, and murmur at her feet ;  
“ Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe  
“ The twilight air, unharm’d by summer’s heat.
- “ She will look on thee ; I have look’d on thee,  
“ Full of that thought, and from that moment ne’er  
“ Thy waters could I dream of, name or see,  
“ Without the inseparable sigh for her.

“ Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream ;  
“ Yes, they will meet the wave I gaze on now :  
“ Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,  
“ That happy wave repass me in its flow.

“ The wave that bears my tears returns no more :  
“ Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep ?  
“ Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore ;  
“ I near thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.

“ But that which keepeth us apart is not  
“ Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,  
“ But the distraction of a various lot,  
“ As various as the climates of our birth.

“ A stranger loves a lady of the land,  
“ Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood  
“ Is all meridian, as if never fann'd  
“ By the bleak wind that chills the polar flood.

“ My blood is all meridian; were it not,  
“ I had not left my clime ;—I shall not be,  
“ In spite of tortures ne’er to be forgot,  
“ A slave again of love, at least of thee.

“ 'Tis vain to struggle—let me perish young—  
“ Live as I lived, and love as I have loved :  
“ To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,  
“ And then at least my heart can ne'er be moved.”

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Calling on Lord Byron one evening after the Opera, we happened to talk of *Cavalieri Serventi*, and Italian women ; and he contended that much was to be said in excuse for them, and in defence of the system.

“ We will put out of the question,” said he,  
“ a *Cavalier Serventecism* ; that is only another  
“ term for prostitution, where the women get all  
“ the money they can, and have (as is the case in  
“ all such contracts) no love to give in exchange.  
“ —I speak of another, and of a different service.”

“ Do you know how a girl is brought up here?”  
continued he. “ Almost from infancy she is  
“ deprived of the endearments of home, and shut  
“ up in a convent till she has attained a mar-  
“ riageable or marketable age. The father now

“ looks out for a suitable son-in-law. As a certain  
“ portion of his fortune is fixed by law for the  
“ dower of his children, his object is to find some  
“ needy man of equal rank, or a very rich one,  
“ the older the better, who will consent to take  
“ his daughter off his hands, under the market  
“ price. This, if she happen to be handsome, is  
“ not difficult of accomplishment. Objections  
“ are seldom made on the part of the young lady  
“ to the age, and personal or other defects of the  
“ intended, who perhaps visits her once in the  
“ parlour as a matter of form or curiosity. She  
“ is too happy to get her liberty on any terms,  
“ and he her money or her person. There is no  
“ love on either side. What happiness is to be  
“ expected, or constancy, from such a *liaison*?  
“ Is it not natural, that in her intercourse with  
“ a world, of which she knows and has seen no-  
“ thing, and unrestrained mistress of her own  
“ time and actions, she should find somebody  
“ to like better, and who likes her better, than  
“ her husband? The Count Guiccioli, for in-  
“ stance, who is the richest man in Romagna, was  
“ sixty when he married Teresa; she sixteen.



“ From the first they had separate apartments,  
“ and she always used to call him *Sir*. What  
“ could be expected from such a preposterous  
“ connexion? For some time she was an Anglo-  
“ lina, and he a Marino Faliero, a good old man ;  
“ but young women, and your Italian ones too,  
“ are not satisfied with your good old men. Love  
“ is not the same dull, cold, calculating feeling  
“ here as in the North. It is the business, the  
“ serious occupation of their lives ; it is a want,  
“ a necessity. Somebody properly defines a wo-  
“ man, ‘ a creature that loves.’ They die of  
“ love ; particularly the Romans : they begin to  
“ love earlier, and feel the passion later than  
“ the Northern people. When I was at Venice,  
“ two dowagers of sixty made love to me.—But  
“ to return to the Guiccioli. The old Count did  
“ not object to her availing herself of the pri-  
“ vileges of her country ; an *Italian* would have  
“ reconciled him to the thing : indeed for some  
“ time he winked at our intimacy, but at length  
“ made an exception against me, as a foreigner,  
“ a heretic, an Englishman, and, what was worse  
“ than all, a liberal.

“ He insisted — the Guiccioli was as obstinate ;  
“ her family took her part. Catholics cannot get  
“ divorces. But, to the scandal of all Romagna,  
“ the matter was at length referred to the Pope,  
“ who ordered her a separate maintenance, on con-  
“ dition that she should reside under her fa-  
“ ther’s roof. All this was not agreeable, and at  
“ length I was forced to smuggle her out of Ra-  
“ venna, having discovered a plot laid with the  
“ sanction of the Legate for shutting her up in a  
“ convent for life, which she narrowly escaped.  
“ — Except Greece, I was never so attached to any  
“ place in my life as to Ravenna, and but for the  
“ failure of the Constitutionals and this fracas,  
“ should probably never have left it. The pea-  
“ santry are the best people in the world, and  
“ the beauty of their women is extraordinary.  
“ Those at Tivoli and Frascati, who are so much  
“ vaunted, are mere Sabines, coarse creatures,  
“ compared to the Romagnese. You may talk of  
“ your English women, and it is true that out of  
“ one hundred Italians and English you will find  
“ thirty of the latter handsome ; but then there  
“ will be one Italian on the other side of the scale,

“ who will more than balance the deficit in num-  
 “ bers—one who, like the Florence Venus, has  
 “ no rival, and can have none in the North. I  
 “ have learnt more from the peasantry of the  
 “ countries I have travelled in than from any  
 “ other sources, especially from the women : \*  
 “ they are more intelligent, as well as communi-  
 “ cative, than the men. I found also at Ravenna  
 “ much education and liberality of thinking among  
 “ the higher classes. The climate is delightful.  
 “ I was unbroken in upon by society. It lies out  
 “ of the way of travellers. I was never tired of  
 “ my rides in the pine-forest : it breathes of the  
 “ Decameron ; it is poetical ground. Francesca  
 “ lived, and Dante was exiled and died at Ravenna.  
 “ There is something inspiring in such an air. †

\* ————“ Female hearts are such a genial soil  
 For kinder feeling, whatsoe’er their nation,  
 They generally pour the wine and oil,  
 Samaritans in every situation.

*Don Juan*, Canto V. Stanza 122.

† The following lines will shew the attachment Lord Byron had to the tranquil life he led at Ravenna :

“ Sweet hour of twilight, in the solitude  
 “ Of the pine forest and the silent shore

“ knew that I never missed my aim; perhaps  
“ this saved me. An event occurred at this time at  
“ Ravenna that made a deep impression on me;  
“ I alluded to it in ‘ Don Juan.’ The military  
“ Commandant of the place, who, though sus-  
“ pected of being secretly a Carbonaro, was too  
“ powerful a man to be arrested, was assassinated  
“ opposite to my palace; a spot perhaps selected  
“ by choice for the commission of the crime. The  
“ measures which were adopted to screen the  
“ murderer prove the assassination to have taken  
“ place by order of the police. I had my foot in  
“ the stirrup at my usual hour of exercise, when  
“ my horse started at the report of a gun. On  
“ looking up I perceived a man throw down  
“ a carbine and run away at full speed, and  
“ another stretched upon the pavement a few  
“ yards from me. On hastening towards him,  
“ I found that it was the unhappy Commandant.  
“ A crowd was soon collected, but no one ven-  
“ tured to offer the least assistance. I soon di-  
“ rected my servant to lift up the bleeding body  
“ and carry it into my palace; but it was repre-  
“ sented to me that by so doing I should confirm

“ the suspicion of being of his party, and incur the  
“ displeasure of the Government. However, it  
“ was no time to calculate between humanity and  
“ danger. I assisted in bearing him into the  
“ house, and putting him on a bed. He was  
“ already dead from several wounds ; he appeared  
“ to have breathed his last without a struggle.  
“ I never saw a countenance so calm. His adju-  
“ tant followed the corpse into the house. I re-  
“ member his lamentation over him :—‘ Povero  
“ diavolo ! non aveva fatto male, anchè ad un  
“ cane.’ ”

---

“ I am sorry,” said he, “ not to have a copy of  
“ my Memoirs to shew you ; I gave them to Moore,  
“ or rather to Moore’s little boy, at Venice. I  
“ remember saying, ‘ Here are 2000*l.* for you,  
“ my young friend.’ I made one reservation in  
“ the gift,—that they were not to be published  
“ till after my death.

“ I have not the least objection to their being  
“ circulated ; in fact they have been read by some  
“ of mine, and several of Moore’s friends and ac-

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“ I have not the least objection to their being  
“ circulated ; in fact they have been read by some  
“ of mine, and several of Moore’s friends and ac-

“ acquaintances ; among others, they were lent to  
“ Lady Burghersh. On returning the MS. her  
“ Ladyship told Moore that she had transcribed  
“ the whole work. This was *un peu fort*, and he  
“ suggested the propriety of her destroying the  
“ copy. She did so, by putting it into the fire in  
“ his presence. Ever since this happened, Doug-  
“ las Kinnaird has been recommending me to  
“ resume possession of the MS., thinking to fright-  
“ en me by saying that a spurious or a real copy,  
“ surreptitiously obtained, may go forth to the  
“ world. I am quite indifferent about the world  
“ knowing all that they contain. There are very  
“ few licentious adventures of my own, or scan-  
“ dalous anecdotes that will affect others, in the  
“ book. It is taken up from my earliest recol-  
“ lections, almost from childhood,—very incohe-  
“ rent, and written in a very loose and familiar  
“ style. The second part will prove a good lesson  
“ to young men ; for it treats of the irregular life  
“ I led at one period, and the fatal consequences  
“ of dissipation. There are few parts that may  
“ not, and none that will not, be read by wo-  
“ men.”



Another time he said :—

“ A very full account of my marriage and separation is contained in my Memoirs. After they were completed, I wrote to Lady Byron, proposing to send them for her inspection, in order that any mistatements or inaccuracy (if any such existed, which I was not aware of,) might be pointed out and corrected. In her answer she declined the offer, without assigning any reason; but desiring, if not on her account, for the sake of her daughter, that they might never appear, and finishing with a threat. My reply was the severest thing I ever wrote, and contained two quotations, one from Shakspeare, and another from Dante.\* I told her that she knew all I had written was incontrovertible truth, and that she did not wish to sanction the truth. I ended by saying, that she might depend on their being published. It was not till after this correspondence that I made Moore the depositary of the MS.

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\* I could not retain them.

“ The first time of my seeing Miss Millbank was  
“ at Lady ——’s. It was a fatal day; and I re-  
“ member that going up stairs I stumbled, and  
“ remarked to Moore, who accompanied me, that  
“ it was a bad omen. I ought to have taken the  
“ warning. On entering the room I observed a  
“ young lady, more simply dressed than the rest  
“ of the assembly, sitting alone upon a sofa. I  
“ took her for a humble companion, and asked  
“ if I was right in my conjecture? ‘ She is a great  
“ heiress,’ said he in a whisper that became lower  
“ as he proceeded; ‘ you had better marry her,  
“ and repair the old place, Newstead.’

“ There was something piquant, and what we  
“ term pretty, in Miss Millbank. Her features  
“ were small and feminine, though not regular.  
“ She had the fairest skin imaginable. Her  
“ figure was perfect for her height, and there was  
“ a simplicity, a retired modesty about her, which  
“ was very characteristic, and formed a happy  
“ contrast to the cold artificial formality, and stu-  
“ died stiffness, which is called fashion. She in-  
“ terested me exceedingly. It is unnecessary to

“ detail the progress of our acquaintance. I be-  
“ came daily more attached to her, and it ended  
“ in my making her a proposal that was rejected.  
“ Her refusal was couched in terms that could not  
“ offend me. I was besides persuaded that, in  
“ declining my offer, she was governed by the  
“ influence of her mother; and was the more  
“ confirmed in this opinion by her reviving our  
“ correspondence herself twelve months after.  
“ The tenor of her letter was, that although she  
“ could not love me, she desired my friendship.  
“ Friendship is a dangerous word for young  
“ ladies; it is Love full-fledged, and waiting for  
“ a fine day to fly.

“ It had been predicted by Mrs. Williams, that  
“ twenty-seven was to be a dangerous age for me.  
“ The fortune-telling witch was right; it was des-  
“ tined to prove so. I shall never forget the 2d  
“ of January! Lady Byron (Byrn, he pronounced  
“ it) was the only unconcerned person present;  
“ Lady Noel, her mother, cried; I trembled like  
“ a leaf, made the wrong responses, and after the  
“ ceremony called her Miss Millbank.

“ There is a singular history attached to the  
“ ring. The very day the match was concluded,  
“ a ring of my mother’s, that had been lost, was  
“ dug up by the gardener at Newstead. I thought  
“ it was sent on purpose for the wedding; but  
“ my mother’s marriage had not been a fortunate  
“ one, and this ring was doomed to be the seal of  
“ an unhappier union still.\*

“ After the ordeal was over, we set off for a  
“ country-seat of Sir Ralph’s; and I was surprised  
“ at the arrangements for the journey, and some-  
“ what out of humour to find a lady’s-maid stuck  
“ between me and my bride. It was rather too  
“ early to assume the husband; so I was forced  
“ to submit, but it was not with a very good  
“ grace. Put yourself in a similar situation, and  
“ tell me if I had not some reason to be in the  
“ sulks. I have been accused of saying, on get-  
“ ting into the carriage, that I had married Lady

---

\* ————“ Save the *ring*,

Which, being the damned’st part of matrimony—”

*Don Juan*, Canto IX. Stanza 70.

“ Byron out of spite, and because she had refused  
“ me twice. Though I was for a moment vexed  
“ at her prudery, or whatever you may choose to  
“ call it, if I had made so uncavalier, not to say  
“ brutal a speech, I am convinced Lady Byron  
“ would instantly have left the carriage to me  
“ and the maid (I mean the lady’s). She had  
“ spirit enough to have done so, and would properly have resented the affront.

“ Our honey-moon was not all sunshine ; it had  
“ its clouds : and Hobhouse has some letters  
“ which would serve to explain the rise and fall  
“ in the barometer,—but it was never down at  
“ zero.

“ You tell me the world says I married Miss  
“ Millbank for her fortune, because she was a  
“ great heiress. All I have ever received, or am  
“ likely to receive, (and that has been twice paid  
“ back too,) was 10,000*l.* My own income at this  
“ period was small, and somewhat bespoke. Newstead was a very unprofitable estate, and brought  
“ me in a bare 1500*l.* a-year; the Lancashire

“ property was hampered with a law-suit, which  
“ has cost me 14,000*l.*, and is not yet finished.

“ We had a house in town, gave dinner-parties,  
“ had separate carriages, and launched into every  
“ sort of extravagance. This could not last long.  
“ My wife’s 10,000*l.* soon melted away. I was  
“ beset by duns, and at length an execution was  
“ levied, and the bailiffs put in possession of the  
“ very beds we had to sleep on. This was no very  
“ agreeable state of affairs, no very pleasant scene  
“ for Lady Byron to witness; and it was agreed  
“ she should pay her father a visit till the storm  
“ had blown over, and some arrangements had  
“ been made with my creditors. You may sup-  
“ pose on what terms we parted, from the style of  
“ a letter she wrote me on the road: you will  
“ think it began ridiculously enough,—‘Dear  
“ Duck!’\*  

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\* Shelley, who knew this story, used to say these two words would look odd in an Italian translation, *Anitra carissima*.

“ Imagine my astonishment to receive, immediately on her arrival in London, a few lines from her father, of a very dry and unaffectionate nature, beginning ‘ Sir,’ and ending with saying that his daughter should never see me again.

“ In my reply I disclaimed his authority as a parent over my wife, and told him I was convinced the sentiments expressed were his, not hers. Another post, however, brought me a confirmation (under her own hand and seal) of her father’s sentence. I afterwards learnt from Fletcher’s (my valet’s) wife, who was at that time *femme-de-chambre* to Lady Byron, that after her definite resolution was taken, and the fatal letter consigned to the post-office, she sent to withdraw it, and was in hysterics of joy that it was not too late. It seems, however, that they did not last long, or that she was afterwards over-persuaded to forward it. There can be no doubt that the influence of her enemies prevailed over her affection for me. You ask me if no cause was assigned for this sudden resolu-

“ tion ?—if I formed no conjecture about the  
“ cause? I will tell you.

“ I have prejudices about women : I do not like  
“ to see them eat. Rousseau makes Julie *un peu*  
“ *gourmande* ; but that is not at all according to  
“ my taste. I do not like to be interrupted when  
“ I am writing. Lady Byron did not attend to  
“ these whims of mine. The only harsh thing I  
“ ever remember saying to her was one evening  
“ shortly before our parting. I was standing be-  
“ fore the fire, ruminating upon the embarrass-  
“ ment of my affairs, and other annoyances, when  
“ Lady Byron came up to me and said, ‘Byron, am  
“ I in your way?’ to which I replied, ‘damnably !’  
“ I was afterwards sorry, and reproached myself  
“ for the expression : but it escaped me unconsci-  
“ ously—involuntarily; I hardly knew what I said.

“ I heard afterwards that Mrs. Charlment had  
“ been the means of poisoning Lady Noel’s mind  
“ against me ;—that she had employed herself and  
“ others in watching me in London, and had re-  
“ ported having traced me into a house in Port-



“ land-place. There was one act of which I might  
“ justly have complained, and which was unwor-  
“ thy of any one but such a confidante : I allude  
“ to the breaking open my writing-desk. A book  
“ was found in it that did not do much credit to  
“ my taste in literature, and some letters from a  
“ married woman with whom I had been intimate  
“ before my marriage. The use that was made of  
“ the latter was most unjustifiable, whatever may  
“ be thought of the breach of confidence that led  
“ to their discovery. Lady Byron sent them to the  
“ husband of the lady, who had the good sense to  
“ take no notice of their contents. The gravest  
“ accusation that has been made against me is that  
“ of having intrigued with Mrs. Mardyn in my  
“ own house ; introduced her to my own table, etc.  
“ There never was a more unfounded calumny.  
“ Being on the Committee of Drury-lane Theatre,  
“ I have no doubt that several actresses called on  
“ me : but as to Mrs. Mardyn, who was a beautiful  
“ woman, and might have been a dangerous vi-  
“ sitress, I was scarcely acquainted (to speak) with  
“ her. I might even make a more serious charge  
“ against —— than employing spies to watch sus-

"pected amours,	*	*	*	*
*        *        *	*	*	"	*
*        *        *	*	*	*	*
*        *        *	*	*	*	*

"I had been shut up in a dark street in London,  
 "writing (I think he said) 'The Siege of Corinth,'  
 "and had refused myself to every one till it was  
 "finished. I was surprised one day by a Doctor  
 "and a Lawyer almost forcing themselves at the  
 "same time into my room. I did not know till  
 "afterwards the real object of their visit. I  
 "thought their questions singular, frivolous, and  
 "somewhat importunate, if not impertinent: but  
 "what should I have thought, if I had known  
 "that they were sent to provide proofs of my  
 "insanity?

*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*

(†)

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† "For Inez called some druggists and physicians,  
 "And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad*;  
 "But as he had some lucid intermissions,  
 "She next decided he was only *bad*.  
 "Yet when they asked her for her depositions,  
 "No sort of explanation could be had,

“ I have no doubt that my answers to these emissaries’ interrogations were not very rational or consistent, for, my imagination was heated by other things. But Dr. Baillie could not conscientiously make me out a certificate for Bedlam ; and perhaps the Lawyer gave a more favourable report to his employers. The Doctor said afterwards, he had been told that I always looked down when Lady Byron bent her eyes on me, and exhibited other symptoms equally infallible, particularly those that marked the late King’s case so strongly. I do not, however, tax Lady Byron with this transaction ; probably she was not privy to it. She was the tool of others. Her

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“ Save that her duty both to man and God  
 “ Required this conduct,—which seem’d very odd.

“ She kept a journal where his faults were noted,  
 “ And opened certain trunks of books and letters,  
 “ All which might, if occasion served, be quoted :  
 “ And then she had all Seville for abettors,  
 “ Besides her good old grandmother ———.”

*Don Juan*, Canto I. Stanzas 27 and 28.

“ mother always detested me ; she had not even  
“ the decency to conceal it in her own house. Di-  
“ ning one day at Sir Ralph’s, (who was a good  
“ sort of man, and of whom you may form some  
“ idea, when I tell you that a leg of mutton was  
“ always served at his table, that he might cut  
“ the same joke upon it,) I broke a tooth, and  
“ was in great pain, which I could not avoid shew-  
“ ing. ‘ It will do you good,’ said Lady Noel ;  
“ ‘ I am glad of it !’ I gave her a look !

“ You ask if Lady Byron were ever in love with  
“ me—I have answered that question already—  
“ No ! I was the fashion when she first came out :  
“ I had the character of being a great rake, and  
“ was a great dandy—both of which young ladies  
“ like. She married me from vanity and the hope  
“ of reforming and fixing me. She was a spoiled  
“ child, and naturally of a jealous disposition ;  
“ and this was increased by the infernal machi-  
“ nations of those in her confidence.

“ She was easily made the dupe of the design-  
“ ing, for she thought her knowledge of man-

“ kind infallible : she had got some foolish idea  
“ of Madame de Staël’s into her head, that a per-  
“ son may be better known in the first hour than  
“ in ten years. She had the habit of drawing  
“ people’s characters after she had seen them once  
“ or twice. She wrote pages on pages about my  
“ character, but it was as unlike as possible.

“ Lady Byron had good ideas, but could never  
“ express them ; wrote poetry too, but it was only  
“ good by accident. Her letters were always  
“ enigmatical, often unintelligible. She was go-  
“ verned by what she called fixed rules and prin-  
“ ciples , squared mathematically. \* She would  
“ have made an excellent wrangler at Cambridge.  
“ It must be confessed, however, that she gave no  
“ proof of her boasted consistency. First, she re-  
“ fused me, then she accepted me, then she sepa-  
“ rated herself from me :—so much for consis-

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\* “ I think that Dante’s more abstruse ecstasies  
“ Meant to personify the mathematics.”

“ tency. I need not tell you of the obloquy and  
“ opprobrium that were cast upon my name when  
“ our separation was made public. I once made  
“ a list from the Journals of the day, of the diffe-  
“ rent worthies, ancient and modern, to whom I  
“ was compared. I remember a few : Nero, Api-  
“ cius, Epicurus, Caligula, Heliogabalus, Henry  
“ the Eighth, and lastly the ——. All my former  
“ friends, even my cousin, George Byron, who  
“ had been brought up with me, and whom I  
“ loved as a brother, took my wife’s part. He fol-  
“ lowed the stream when it was strongest against  
“ me, and can never expect any thing from me :  
“ he shall never touch a sixpence of mine. I was  
“ looked upon as the worst of husbands, the most  
“ abandoned and wicked of men, and my wife as  
“ a suffering angel—an incarnation of all the vir-  
“ tues and perfections of the sex. I was abused  
“ in the public prints, made the common talk of  
“ private companies, hissed as I went to the House  
“ of Lords, insulted in the streets, afraid to go to  
“ the theatre, whence the unfortunate Mrs. Mar-  
“ dyn had been driven with insult. The Exami-  
“ ner was the only paper that dared say a word

“ in my defence, and Lady Jersey the only person  
“ in the fashionable world that did not look upon  
“ me as a monster.

“ I once addressed some lines to her that made  
“ her my friend ever after. The subject of them  
“ was suggested by her being excluded from a cer-  
“ tain cabinet of the beauties of the day. I have  
“ the lines somewhere, and will shew them to you.

“ In addition to all these mortifications my af-  
“ fairs were irretrievably involved, and almost so  
“ as to make me what they wished. I was com-  
“ pelled to part with Newstead, which I never  
“ could have ventured to sell in my mother’s life-  
“ time. As it is, I shall never forgive myself for  
“ having done so; though I am told that the  
“ estate would not now bring half as much as I  
“ got for it. This does not at all reconcile me to  
“ having parted with the old abbey.\* I did not

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\* The regard which he entertained for it is proved by the passage in *Don Juan*, Canto XIII. Stanza 55, beginning thus :

“ To Norman Abbey whirl’d the noble pair,” etc.

“ make up my mind to this step, but from the last  
“ necessity. I had my wife’s portion to repay,  
“ and was determined to add 10,000 *l.* more of my  
“ own to it; which I did. I always hated being  
“ in debt, and do not owe a guinea. The moment  
“ I had put my affairs in train, and in little more  
“ than eighteen months after my marriage, I left  
“ England, an involuntary exile, intending it  
“ should be for ever.”\*

Speaking of the multitude of strangers, whose visits of curiosity or impertinence he was harassed by for some years after he came abroad, particularly at Venice, he said :

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\* His feelings may be conceived by the two following passages :

“ I can’t but say it is an awkward sight,  
“ To see one’s native land receding through  
“ The growing waters—it unmans one quite.”—

*Don Juan*, Canto II. Stanza 12.

“ Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,  
“ With nought of hope left.”

*Childe Harold*, Canto III. Stanza 16.



“ Who would wish to make a show-bear of  
“ himself, and dance to any tune any fool likes to  
“ play? Madame de Staël said, I think of Goëthe,  
“ that people who did not wish to be judged by  
“ what they said, did not deserve that the world  
“ should trouble itself about what they thought.  
“ She had herself a most unconscionable insatiable-  
“ bility of talking and shining. If she had talk-  
“ ed less, it would have given her time to have  
“ written more, and would have been better. For  
“ my part, it is indifferent to me what the world  
“ says or thinks of me. Let them know me in  
“ my books. My conversation is never brilliant.

“ Americans are the only people to whom I never  
“ refused to shew myself. The Yankees are great  
“ friends of mine. I wish to be well thought of  
“ on the other side of the Atlantic; not that I am  
“ better appreciated there, than on this; perhaps  
“ worse. Some American reviewer has been per-  
“ severing in his abuse and personality, but he  
“ should have minded his ledger; he never exci-  
“ ted my spleen.\* I was confirmed in my reso-  
“ lution of shutting my door against all the tra-

“velling English by the impertinence of an anonymous scribbler, who said he might have known me, but would not.”

I interrupted him by telling him he need not have been so angry on that occasion,—that it was an authoress who had been guilty of that remark. “I don’t wonder,” added I, “that a spinster should have avoided associating with so dangerous an acquaintance as you had the character of being at Venice.”

“Well, I did not know that these ‘Sketches of

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\* The taste and critical acumen of the American magazine will appear from the following extract :

“The verses (it is of the ‘Prisoner of Chillon’ that it speaks) are in the eight syllable measure, and occasionally display some pretty poetry ; at all events, there is little in them to offend.

“We do not find any passage of sufficient beauty or originality to warrant extract.”

*Am. Critical Review*, 1817.

“ Italy’ were the production of a woman; but  
“ whether it was a Mr., Mrs., or Miss, the remark  
“ was equally uncalled for. To be sure, the life  
“ I led at Venice was not the most saintlike in the  
“ world.”

“ Yes,” said I, “ if you were to be canonized, it  
must be as San Ciappelletto.”

“ Not so bad as that either,” said he, somewhat  
seriously.

“ Venice,” resumed he, “ is a melancholy place  
“ to reside in :—to see a city die daily as she does,  
“ is a sad contemplation. I sought to distract my  
“ mind from a sense of her desolation, and my  
“ own solitude, by plunging into a vortex that  
“ was any thing but pleasure. When one gets  
“ into a mill-stream, it is difficult to swim against  
“ it, and keep out of the wheels. The conse-  
“ quences of being carried down by it would  
“ furnish an excellent lesson for youth. You are  
“ too old to profit by it. But, who ever profited  
“ by the experience of others, or his own? When

“ you read my Memoirs, you will learn the evils,  
“ moral and physical, of true dissipation. I assure  
“ you my life is very entertaining, and very in-  
“ structive.”

I said, “ I suppose, when you left England, you were a Childe Harold, and at Venice a Don Giovanni, and Fletcher your Leporello.” He laughed at the remark. I asked him, in what way his life would prove a good lesson? and he gave me several anecdotes of himself, which I have thrown into a sort of narrative.

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“ Almost all the friends of my youth are dead ;  
“ either shot in duels, ruined, or in the galleys :”  
(mentioning the names of several.)

“ Among those I lost in the early part of my  
“ career, was Lord Falkland,—poor fellow ! our  
“ fathers’ fathers were friends. He lost his life  
“ for a joke, and one too he did not make himself.  
“ The present race is more steady than the last.  
“ They have less constitution and not so much

“ money—that accounts for the change in their  
“ morals.

“ I am now tamed ; but before I married, shewed  
“ some of the blood of my ancestors. It is  
“ ridiculous to say that we do not inherit  
“ our passions, as well as the gout, or any other  
“ disorder.

“ I was not so young when my father died, but  
“ that I perfectly remember him ; and had very  
“ early a horror of matrimony, from the sight of  
“ domestic broils : this feeling came over me very  
“ strongly at my wedding. Something whispered  
“ me that I was sealing my own death-warrant.  
“ I am a great believer in presentiments. So-  
“ crates’ demon was no fiction. Monk Lewis  
“ had his monitor, and Napoleon many warnings.  
“ At the last moment I would have retreated, if I  
“ could have done so. I called to mind a friend  
“ of mine, who had married a young, beautiful,  
“ and rich girl, and yet was miserable. He had  
“ strongly urged me against putting my neck in  
“ the same yoke : and to shew you how firmly

“ I was resolved to attend to his advice, I betted  
“ Hay fifty guineas to one, that I should always  
“ remain single. Six years afterwards I sent him  
“ the money. The day before I proposed to Lady  
“ Byron, I had no idea of doing so.”

After this digression he continued :—

“ I lost my father when I was only six years of  
“ age. My mother, when she was in a rage with  
“ me, (and I gave her cause enough,) used to say,  
“ ‘ Ah, you little dog, you are a Byron all over ;  
“ you are as bad as your father !’ It was very  
“ different from Mrs. Malaprop’s saying, ‘ Ah !  
“ good dear Mr. Malaprop, I never loved him till  
“ he was dead.’ But, in fact, my father was, in  
“ his youth, any thing but a ‘ Cœlebs in search  
“ of a wife.’ He would have made a bad hero for  
“ Hannah More. He ran out three fortunes, and  
“ married or ran away with three women, and  
“ once wanted a guinea, that he wrote for ; I have  
“ the note. He seemed born for his own ruin,  
“ and that of the other sex. He began by se-  
“ ducing Lady Carmarthen, and spent for her

“ 4000*l.* a-year; and not content with one ad-  
“ venture of this kind, afterwards eloped with  
“ Miss Gordon. His marriage was not destined  
“ to be a very fortunate one either, and I don’t  
“ wonder at her differing from Sheridan’s widow  
“ in the play. They certainly could not have  
“ claimed the flitch.

“ The phrenologists tell me that other lines,  
“ besides that of thought, (the middle of three  
“ horizontal lines on his forehead, on which he  
“ prided himself,) are strongly developed in the  
“ hinder part of my cranium; particularly that  
“ called philoprogenitiveness. \* I suppose, too,  
“ the pugnacious bump might be found some-  
“ where, because my uncle had it.

“ You have heard the unfortunate story of his  
“ duel with his relation and neighbour. After  
“ that melancholy event, he shut himself up at  
“ Newstead, and was in the habit of feeding

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\* He appears to have mistaken the meaning of this word in the vocabulary of the Craniologists, as in *Don Juan*.

“ crickets, which were his only companions. He  
“ had made them so tame as to crawl over him,  
“ and used to whip them with a whisp of straw,  
“ if too familiar.” When he died, tradition says  
“ that they left the house in a body. I suppose  
“ I derive my superstition from this branch of  
“ the family; but though I attend to none of  
“ these new-fangled theories, I am inclined to  
“ think that there is more in a chart of the  
“ skull than the Edinburgh Reviewers suppose.\*  
“ However that may be, I was a wayward youth,  
“ and gave my mother a world of trouble,—as I  
“ fear Ada will her’s, for I am told she is a little  
“ termagant. I had an ancestor too that expired  
“ laughing, (I suppose that my good spirits came  
“ from him,) and two whose affection was such  
“ for each other, that they died almost at the  
“ same moment. There seems to have been a flaw  
“ in my escutcheon there, or that loving couple  
“ have monopolized all the connubial bliss of  
“ the family.

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\* He had probably been reading the article on Gall and Spurzheim.



“ I passed my boyhood at Marlodge near Aber-  
“ deen, occasionally visiting the Highlands ; and  
“ long retained an affection for Scotland ;—that,  
“ I suppose, I imbibed from my mother. My love  
“ for it, however, was at one time much shaken  
“ by the critique in ‘ The Edinburgh Review’ on  
“ ‘ The Hours of Idleness,’ and I transferred a  
“ portion of my dislike to the country ; but my  
“ affection for it soon flowed back into its old  
“ channel.

“ I don’t know from whom I inherited verse-  
“ making ; probably the wild scenery of Morven  
“ and Loch-na-garr, and the banks of the Dee,  
“ were the parents of my poetical vein, and the  
“ developers of my poetical *boss*. If it was so, it  
“ was dormant ; at least, I never wrote any thing  
“ worth mentioning till I was in love. Dante  
“ dates his passion for Beatrice at twelve. I was  
“ almost as young when I fell over head and ears

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*Note.*—He wrote about this time ‘ The Curse of Minerva ;’  
in which he seems very closely to have followed Churchill.

He came to England in 1798.

“ in love ; but I anticipate. I was sent to Harrow  
 “ at twelve, and spent my vacations at Newstead.  
 “ It was there that I first saw Mary C————\*.  
 “ She was several years older than myself : but,  
 “ at my age, boys like something older than

\* —————“ It was a name

“ Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not ;—and why ?

“ Time taught him a deep answer.”

*The Dream.*

“ I have a passion for the name of ‘ Mary,’

“ For once it was a magic sound to me ;

“ And still it half calls up the realms of fairy,

“ Where I beheld what never was to be.

“ All feelings changed, but this was last to vary—

“ A spell from which even yet I am not quite free.

“ But I grow sad—— !”

*Don Juan, Canto V. Stanza 4.*

—————“ Yet still, to pay my court, I

“ Gave what I had—a heart :—as the world went, I

“ Gave what was worth a world,—for worlds could never

“ Restore me the pure feelings gone for ever !

“ ’Twas the boy’s ‘ mite,’ and, like the ‘ widow’s,’ may,

“ Perhaps, be weighed hereafter, if not now.”

*Don Juan, Canto VI. Stanza 5, etc.*

“ themselves, as they do younger, later in life.  
“ Our estates adjoined : but, owing to the un-  
“ happy circumstance of the feud to which I before  
“ alluded, our families (as is generally the case  
“ with neighbours who happen to be relations,)  
“ were never on terms of more than common  
“ civility,—scarcely those. I passed the summer  
“ vacation of this year among the Malvern hills :  
“ those were days of romance ! She was the *beau*  
“ *idéâl* of all that my youthful fancy could paint  
“ of beautiful ; and I have taken all my fables  
“ about the celestial nature of women from the  
“ perfection my imagination created in her.—I say  
“ created, for I found her, like the rest of the sex,  
“ any thing but angelic.

“ I returned to Harrow, after my trip to Chel-  
“ tenham, more deeply enamoured than ever,  
“ and passed the next holidays at Newstead. I  
“ now began to fancy myself a man, and to make  
“ love in earnest. Our meetings were stolen ones,  
“ and my letters passed through the medium of a  
“ confidante. A gate leading from Mr. C——’s  
“ grounds to those of my mother, was the place

“ of our interviews. But the ardour was all on  
“ my side. I was serious ; she was volatile. She  
“ liked me as a younger brother, and treated and  
“ laughed at me as a boy. She, however, gave  
“ me her picture, and that was something to make  
“ verses upon.\*

“ During the last year that I was at Harrow,  
“ all my thoughts were occupied on this love-  
“ affair. I had, besides, a spirit that ill brooked  
“ the restraints of school-discipline ; for I had  
“ been encouraged by servants in all my violence  
“ of temper, and was used to command. Every  
“ thing like a task was repugnant to my nature ;  
“ and I came away a very indifferent classic, and  
“ read in nothing that was useful. That subor-  
“ dination, which is the soul of all discipline,

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\* He had always a black ribbon round his neck, to which was attached a locket containing hair and a picture. We had been playing at billiards one night till the balls appeared double, when all at once he searched hastily for something under his waistcoat, and said, in great alarm, “ Good God ! I have lost my———— ! ” but before he had finished the sentence, he discovered the hidden treasure.

“ I submitted to with great difficulty ; yet I did  
“ submit to it : and I have always retained a sense  
“ of Drury’s \* kindness, which enabled me to  
“ bear it and fagging too. The Duke of Dorset  
“ was my fag. I was not a very hard task-master.  
“ There were times in which, if I had not con-  
“ sidered it as a school, I should have been happy  
“ at Harrow. There is one spot I should like  
“ to see again : I was particularly delighted with  
“ the view from the Church-yard, and used to sit  
“ for hours on the stile leading into the fields ;  
“ —even then I formed a wish to be buried there.  
“ Of all my schoolfellows, I know no one for whom  
“ I have retained so much friendship as for Lord  
“ Clare. I have been constantly corresponding  
“ with him ever since I knew he was in Italy ; and  
“ look forward to seeing him, and talking over  
“ with him our old Harrow stories, with infinite  
“ delight. There is no pleasure in life equal to  
“ that of meeting an old friend. You know how  
“ glad I was to see Hay. Why did not Scroope

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\* See Lines addressed to him in ‘ The Hours of Idleness.’

“Davies come to see me? Some one told me  
“that he was at Florence, but it is impossible.

“There are two things that strike me at this  
“moment, which I did at Harrow : I fought  
“Lord Calthorpe for writing ‘D—d Atheist!’  
“under my name; and prevented the school-  
“room from being burnt during a rebellion, by  
“pointing out to the boys the names of their  
“fathers and grandfathers on the walls.

“Had I married Miss C——, perhaps the whole  
“tenor of my life would have been different.\*  
“She jilted me, however, but her marriage prov-  
“ed any thing but a happy one.† She was at  
“length separated from Mr. M——, and proposed  
“an interview with me, but by the advice of my

\* Perhaps in his lyrical pieces, even those ‘To Thyrza,’ he never surpassed those exquisitely feeling Stanzas, beginning—

“O had my fate been join’d to thine,” etc.

† ————“the one

“To end in madness; both in misery.”

*The Dream.*

“ sister I declined it. I remember meeting her  
“ after my return from Greece, but pride had  
“ conquered my love; and yet it was not with  
“ perfect indifference I saw her.\*

“ For a man to become a poet (witness Petrarch  
“ and Dante) he must be in love, or miserable.  
“ I was both when I wrote the ‘Hours of Idleness;’  
“ some of those poems, in spite of what the  
“ reviewers say, are as good as any I ever pro-  
“ duced.

“ For some years after the event that had so  
“ much influence on my fate, I tried to drown  
“ the remembrance of it and her in the most  
“ depraving dissipation;† but the poison was in

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\* Yet I was calm. I knew the time  
My heart would swell but at thy look;  
But now to tremble were a crime.  
We met, and not a nerve was shook!

† “ And monks might deem their time was come agen  
“ If ancient tales say true, nor wrong the holy men.”

*Childe Harold, Canto I. Stanza 7.*

“ the cup.           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*  
           \*           \*           \*           \*           \*

“ There had been found by the gardener, in  
 “ digging, a skull that had probably belonged to  
 “ some jolly friar or monk of the Abbey about the  
 “ time it was dis-monasteried.”

“ I heard at the Countess S——’s the other  
 evening,” said I, interrupting him, “ that you  
 drink out of a skull now.” He took no notice of  
 my observation, but continued :

“ Observing it to be of giant size, and in a  
 “ perfect state of preservation, a strange fancy  
 “ seized me of having it set and mounted as a  
 “ drinking-cup. I accordingly sent it to town,  
 “ and it returned with a very high polish, and of  
 “ a mottled colour like tortoise-shell (Colonel  
 “ Wildman now has it). I remember scribbling  
 “ some lines about it; but that was not all : I  
 “ afterwards established at the Abbey a new or-  
 “ der. The members consisted of twelve, and I  
 “ elected myself grand master, or Abbot of the  
 “ Skull, a grand heraldic title. A set of black



“ gowns, mine distinguished from the rest, was  
“ ordered, and from time to time, when a par-  
“ ticular hard day was expected, a chapter was  
“ held ; the crane was filled with claret, and, in  
“ imitation of the Goths of old, passed about to  
“ the gods of the Consistory, whilst many a grim  
“ joke was cut at its expense.”

“ You seem,” said I, “ to have had a particular  
predilection for skulls and cross-bones ; a friend  
of mine, Mr.—, told me he took some home for  
you from Switzerland.”

“ They were from the field of Morat,” said he ;  
“ a single bone of one of those heroes is worth all  
“ the skulls of all the priests that ever existed.”

“ Talking of Morat,” said I, “ where did you  
find the story of Julia Alpinula ? M—— and I  
searched among its archives in vain.”

“ I took the inscription,” said he, “ from an  
“ old chronicle ; the stone has no existence.—But  
“ to continue. You know the story of the bear

“ that I brought up for a degree when I was at  
“ Trinity. I had a great hatred of College rules,  
“ and contempt for academical honours. How  
“ many of their wranglers have ever distinguished  
“ themselves in the world? There was, by the  
“ by, rather a witty satire founded on my bear.  
“ A friend of Shelley’s made an Ourang Outang  
“ (Sir Oran Haut-ton) the hero of a novel, had  
“ him created a baronet, and returned for the  
“ borough of One Vote—I forget the name of the  
“ novel.\* I believe they were as glad to get rid  
“ of me at Cambridge† as they were at Harrow.

“ Another of the wild freaks I played during  
“ my mother’s life-time, was to dress up Mrs.——,  
“ and to pass her off as my brother Gordon, in  
“ order that my mother might not hear of  
“ my having such a female acquaintance. You  
“ would not think me a Scipio in those days, but I  
“ can safely say I never seduced any woman. I will  
“ give you an instance of great forbearance:—

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\* Melincourt.

† He remained at Cambridge till nineteen.

“ Mrs. L. G—— wrote and offered to let me have  
“ her daughter for 100*l*. Can you fancy such de-  
“ pravity? The old lady’s *P. S.* was excellent.  
“ ‘ With *dilicaci* every thing may be made *asy*.’  
“ But the same post brought me a letter from the  
“ young one, deprecating my taking advantage  
“ of their necessities, and ending with saying that  
“ she prized her virtue. I respected it too, and  
“ sent her some money. There are few Josephs  
“ in the world, and many Potiphar’s wives.

“ A curious thing happened to me shortly after  
“ the honey-moon, which was very awkward at  
“ the time, but has since amused me much. It  
“ so happened that three married women were on  
“ a wedding visit to my wife, (and in the same  
“ room, at the same time,) whom I had known to  
“ be all birds of the same nest. Fancy the scene  
“ of confusion that ensued !

“ I have seen a great deal of Italian society, and  
“ swum in a gondola, but nothing could equal the  
“ profligacy of high life in England, especially  
“ that of—— when I knew it.

“ There was a lady at that time, double my  
“ own age, the mother of several children who  
“ were perfect angels, with whom I had formed a  
“ *liaison* that continued without interruption for  
“ eight months. The autumn of a beauty like  
“ her’s is preferable to the spring in others. She  
“ told me she was never in love till she was  
“ thirty; and I thought myself so with her, when  
“ she was forty. I never felt a stronger passion;  
“ which she returned with equal ardour. I was  
“ as fond of, indeed more attached than I ought  
“ to have been, to one who had bestowed her  
“ favours on many; but I was flattered at a prefe-  
“ rence that had led her to discard another, who  
“ in personal attractions and fashion was far my  
“ superior. She had been sacrificed, almost be-  
“ fore she was a woman, to one whose mind and  
“ body were equally contemptible in the scale of  
“ creation; and on whom she bestowed a nu-  
“ merous family, to which the law gave him the  
“ right to be called father. Strange as it may  
“ seem, she gained (as all women do) an influence  
“ over me so strong, that I had great difficulty  
“ in breaking with her, even when I knew she

“ had been inconstant to me; and once was on  
“ the point of going abroad with her,—and nar-  
“ rowly escaped this folly. I was at this time  
“ a mere Bond-street lounge—a great man at  
“ lobbies, coffee, and gambling-houses: my after-  
“ noons were passed in visits, luncheons, loung-  
“ ing and boxing—not to mention drinking! If  
“ I had known you in early life, you would not  
“ have been alive now. I remember Scroope  
“ Davies, H—, and myself, clubbing 19l., all  
“ we had in our pockets, and losing it at a hell in  
“ St. James’s-street, at chicken-hazard, which  
“ may be called *fowl*; and afterwards getting  
“ drunk together till H. and S. D. quarrelled.  
“ Scroope afterwards wrote to me for my pistols  
“ to shoot himself; but I declined lending them,  
“ on the plea that they would be forfeited as a  
“ deodand. I knew my answer would have more  
“ effect than four sides of prosing.

“ Don’t suppose, however, that I took any  
“ pleasure in all these excesses, or that parson  
“ A. K. or W— were associates to my taste. The  
“ miserable consequences of such a life are de-

“tailed at length in my Memoirs. My own master at an age when I most required a guide, and left to the dominion of my passions when they were the strongest, with a fortune anticipated before I came into possession of it, and a constitution impaired by early excesses, I commenced my travels in 1809, with a joyless indifference to a world that was all before me.” \*

“Well might you say, speaking feelingly,” said I:—

“There is no sterner moralist than pleasure.” †

I asked him about Venice:

\* “I wish they knew the life of a young noble;

\*        \*        \*        \*        \*        \*

“They’re young, but know not youth: it is anticipated;

“Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;

“Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated,

“Their cash comes *from*, their wealth goes *to* a Jew.”

*Don Juan*, Canto XI. Stanzas 74 and 75.

† He used to say there were three great men ruined in one year, Brummel, himself, and Napoleon!

“ Venice ! ” said he, “ I detest every recollec-  
“ tion of the place, the people, and my pursuits.  
“ I there mixed again in society, trod again the  
“ old round of conversaziones, balls, and concerts,  
“ was every night at the Opera, a constant fre-  
“ quenter of the Ridotta during the Carnival,  
“ and, in short, entered into all the dissipation of  
“ that luxurious place. Every thing in a Vene-  
“ tian life,—its gondolas, its effeminating indo-  
“ lence, its Siroccos,—tend to enervate the mind  
“ and body. My rides were a resource and a  
“ stimulus ; but the deep sands of Lido broke my  
“ horses down, and I got tired of that monotonous  
“ sea-shore ;—to be sure, I passed the Villagiatura  
“ on the Brenta.\*

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\* To give the reader an idea of the stories circulated and believed about Lord Byron, I will state one as a specimen of the rest, which I heard the other day :—

“ Lord Byron, who is an execrable bad horseman, was riding one evening in the Brenta, spouting ‘ Metastasio.’ A Venetian, passing in a close carriage at the time, laughed at his bad Italian ; upon which his Lordship horsewhipped him, and threw a card in at the window. The nobleman took no notice of the insult.”—ANSWER. Lord Byron was an

“ I wrote little at Venice, and was forced into  
“ the search of pleasure,—an employment I was  
“ soon jaded with the pursuit of.

“ Women were there, as they have ever been  
“ fated to be, my bane. Like Napoleon, I have  
“ always had a great contempt for women; and  
“ formed this opinion of them not hastily, but  
“ from my own fatal experience. My writings,  
“ indeed, tend to exalt the sex; and my imagina-  
“ tion has always delighted in giving them a *beau*  
“ *idé*al likeness, but I only drew them as a painter  
“ or statuary would do,—as they should be.\*  
“ Perhaps my prejudices, and keeping them at

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excellent horseman, never read a line of ‘Metastasio,’ and pronounced Italian like a native. He must have been remarkably ingenious to horsewhip in a *close carriage*, and find a nobleman who pocketed the affront! But “*ex uno disce omnes.*”

\* His Medora, Gulnare (Kaled), Zuleika, Thyrza, Angiolina, Myrrha, Adah, and Haidee in Don Juan, are beautiful creations of gentleness, sensibility, firmness, and constancy. If, as a reviewer has sagely discovered, all his male charac-



“ a distance, contributed to prevent the illusion  
“ from altogether being worn out and destroyed as  
“ to their celestial qualities.

“ They are in an unnatural state of society.  
“ The Turks and Eastern people manage these  
“ matters better than we do. They lock them  
“ up, and they are much happier. Give a woman  
“ a looking-glass and a few sugar-plums, and she  
“ will be satisfied.

“ I have suffered from the other sex ever since  
“ I can remember any thing. I began by being  
“ jilted, and ended by being unwived. Those are  
“ wisest who make no connexion of wife or mis-  
“ tress. The *knight-service* of the Continent,  
“ with or without the *k*, is perhaps a slavery  
“ as bad, or worse, than either. An intrigue  
“ with a married woman at home, though more  
“ secret, is equally difficult to break. I had no

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ters, from Childe Harold down to Lucifer, are the same, he cannot be denied the dramatic faculty in his women,—in whom there is little family likeness.

“ tie of any kind at Venice, yet I was not without  
“ my annoyances. You may remember seeing  
“ the portrait of a female which Murray got en-  
“ graved, and dubbed my ‘ Fornarina.’

“ Harlowe, the poor fellow who died soon after  
“ his return from Rome, and who used to copy  
“ pictures from memory, took my likeness when  
“ he was at Venice : and one day this frail one,  
“ who was a casual acquaintance of mine, hap-  
“ pened to be at my palace, and to be seen by the  
“ painter, who was struck with her, and begged  
“ she might sit to him. She did so, and I sent the  
“ drawing home as a specimen of the Venetians,  
“ and not a bad one either ; for the jade was hand-  
“ some, though the most troublesome shrew and  
“ termagant I ever met with. To give you an  
“ idea of the lady, she used to call me the *Gran*  
“ *Cane della Madonna*. When once she obtained  
“ a footing inside my door, she took a dislike to  
“ the outside of it, and I had great difficulty in  
“ uncolonizing her. She forced her way back  
“ one day when I was at dinner, and snatching a  
“ knife from the table, offered to stab herself if I

“ did not consent to her stay. Seeing I took  
“ no notice of her threat, as knowing it to be only  
“ a feint, she ran into the balcony and threw  
“ herself into the canal. As it was only knee-deep  
“ and there were plenty of gondolas, one of them  
“ picked her up. This affair made a great noise  
“ at the time. Some said that I had thrown her  
“ into the water, others that she had drowned  
“ herself for love ; but this is the real story.

“ I got into nearly as great a scrape by making  
“ my court to a spinster. As many Dowagers as  
“ you please at Venice, but beware of flirting with  
“ *Raggazzas*. I had been one night under her  
“ window serenading, and the next morning who  
“ should be announced at the same time but a  
“ priest and a police officer, come, as I thought,  
“ either to shoot or marry me again,—I did not  
“ care which. I was disgusted and tired with the  
“ life I led at Venice, and was glad to turn my  
“ back on it. The Austrian Government, too,  
“ partly contributed to drive me away. They in-  
“ tercepted my books and papers, opened my let-  
“ ters, and proscribed my works. I was not sorry

“ for this last arbitrary act, as a very bad translation of ‘Childe Harold’ had just appeared, which I was not at all pleased with. I did not like my old friend in his new loose dress; it was a dishabille that did not at all become him,—those *sciolti versi* that they put him into.”

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It is difficult to judge, from the contradictory nature of his writings, what the religious opinions of Lord Byron really were. Perhaps the conversations I held with him may throw some light upon a subject that cannot fail to excite curiosity. On the whole, I am inclined to think that if he were occasionally sceptical, and thought it, as he says,

—— “ A pleasant voyage, perhaps, to float,  
“ Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation, ”\*

yet his wavering never amounted to a disbelief in the divine Founder of Christianity.

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\* *Don Juan*, Canto IX. Stanza 18.

“I always took great delight,” observed he,  
“in the English Cathedral service. It cannot fail  
“to inspire every man, who feels at all, with de-  
“votion. Notwithstanding which, Christianity  
“is not the best source of inspiration for a poet.  
“No poet should be tied down to a direct profes-  
“sion of faith. Metaphysics open a vast field;  
“Nature, and anti-Mosaical speculations on the  
“origin of the world, a wide range, and sources  
“of poetry that are shut out by Christianity.”

I advanced Tasso and Milton.

“Tasso and Milton,” replied he, “wrote on  
“Christian subjects, it is true; but how did they  
“treat them? The ‘Jerusalem Delivered’ deals  
“little in Christian doctrines, and the ‘Paradise  
“Lost’ makes use of the heathen mythology,  
“which is surely scarcely allowable. Milton dis-  
“carded papacy, and adopted no creed in its  
“room; he never attended divine worship.

“His great epics, that nobody reads, prove no-  
“thing. He took his text from the Old and New

“ Testaments. He shocks the severe apprehensions  
“ of the Catholics, as he did those of the Divines of  
“ his day, by too great a familiarity with Heaven,  
“ and the introduction of the Divinity himself;  
“ and, more than all, by making the Devil his  
“ hero, and deifying the demons.

“ He certainly excites compassion for Satan, and  
“ endeavours to make him out an injured person-  
“ age—he gives him human passions too, makes  
“ him pity Adam and Eve, and justify himself  
“ much as Prometheus does. Yet Milton was ne-  
“ ver blamed for all this. I should be very curious  
“ to know what his real belief was.\* The ‘Para-  
“ dise Lost’ and ‘Regained’ do not satisfy me on  
“ this point. One might as well say that Moore  
“ is a fire-worshipper, or a follower of Mokanna,  
“ because he chose those subjects from the East;  
“ or that I am a Cainist.”

Another time he said :

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\* A religious work of Milton's has since been discovered, and will throw light on this interesting subject.

“ One mode of worship yields to another ; no re-  
“ ligion has lasted more than two thousand years.  
“ Out of the eight hundred millions that the globe  
“ contains, only two hundred millions are Chris-  
“ tians. Query,—What is to become of the six  
“ hundred millions that do not believe, and of  
“ those incalculable millions that lived before  
“ Christ?

“ People at home are mad about Missionary So-  
“ cieties, and missions to the East. I have been  
“ applied to to subscribe, several times since,  
“ and once before I left England. The Catholic  
“ priests have been labouring hard for nearly a  
“ century; but what have they done? Out of  
“ eighty millions of Hindoos, how many prose-  
“ lytes have been made? Sir J. Malcolm said at  
“ Murray’s before several persons, that the Padres,  
“ as he called them, had only made six converts  
“ at Bombay during his time, and that even this  
“ black little flock forsook their shepherds when  
“ the rum was out. Their faith evaporated with  
“ the fumes of the arrack. Besides, the Hindoos  
“ believe that they have had nine incarnations :

“ the Missionaries preach, that a people whom  
“ the Indians only know to despise, have had one.  
“ It is nine to one against them, by their own  
“ shewing.

“ Another doctrine can never be in repute  
“ among the Solomons of the East. It cannot be  
“ easy to persuade men who have had as many  
“ wives as they pleased, to be content with one;  
“ besides, a woman is old at twenty in that coun-  
“ try. What are men to do? They are not all  
“ St. Anthonies.— I will tell you a story. A cer-  
“ tain Signior Antonio of my acquaintance mar-  
“ ried a very little round fat wife, very fond of  
“ waltzing, who went by the name of the *Ten-*  
“ *tazione di Sant’ Antonio*. There is a picture,  
“ a celebrated one, in which a little woman not  
“ unressembling my description plays the prin-  
“ cipal rôle, and is most troublesome to the Saint,  
“ most trying to his virtue. Very few of the mo-  
“ dern saints will have his forbearance, though  
“ they may imitate him in his martyrdom.

“ I have been reading,” said he one day, “ Ta-



“ citus’ account of the siege of Jerusalem, under  
“ Titus. What a sovereign contempt the Romans  
“ had for the Jews! Their country seems to have  
“ been little better than themselves.

“ Priestley denied the original sin, and that any  
“ would be damned. Wesley, the object of Sou-  
“ they’s panegyric, preached the doctrines of elec-  
“ tion and faith, and, like all the sectarians, does  
“ not want texts to prove both.

“ The best Christians can never be satisfied of  
“ their own salvation. Dr. Johnson died like a  
“ coward, and Cowper was near shooting himself;  
“ Hume went off the stage like a brave man, and  
“ Voltaire’s last moments do not seem to have  
“ been clouded by any fears of what was to come.  
“ A man may study any thing till he believes in  
“ it. Creech died a Lucretian, Burckhardt and  
“ Browne were Mohammedans. Sale, the tran-  
“ slator of the Koran, was suspected of being an  
“ Islamite, but a very different one from you,  
“ Shiloh\* (as he sometimes used to call Shelley).

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\* Alluding to the ‘Revolt of Islam.’

“ You are a Protestant—you protest against all  
“ religions. There is T—— will traduce Dante  
“ till he becomes a Dantist. I am called a Mani-  
“ chæan : I may rather be called an Any-chæan,  
“ or an Anything-arian. How do you like my  
“ sect? The sect of Anything-arians sounds well,  
“ does it not?”

Calling on him the next day, we found him, as  
was sometimes the case, silent, dull, and sombre.  
At length he said:—

“ Here is a little book somebody has sent me  
“ about Christianity, that has made me very un-  
“ comfortable : the reasoning seems to me very  
“ strong, the proofs are very staggering. I don’t  
“ think you can answer it, Shelley ; at least I am  
“ sure I can’t, and what is more, I don’t wish it.”

“ Speaking of Gibbon, he said:—

“ L—— B——— thought the question set at  
“ rest in the ‘ History of the Decline and Fall,’ but  
“ I am not so easily convinced. It is not a matter

“ of volition to unbelieve. Who likes to own  
“ that he has been a fool all his life,—to unlearn  
“ all that he has been taught in his youth? or can  
“ think that some of the best men that ever lived  
“ have been fools? I have often wished I had  
“ been born a Catholic. That purgatory of  
“ theirs is a comfortable doctrine; I wonder  
“ the reformers gave it up, or did not substitute  
“ something as consolatory in its room. It is an  
“ improvement on the transmigration, Shelley,  
“ which all your wiseacre philosophers taught.

“ You believe in Plato’s three principles;—why  
“ not in the Trinity? One is not more mystical  
“ than the other. I don’t know why I am consi-  
“ dered an enemy to religion, and an unbeliever.  
“ I disowned the other day that I was of Shelley’s  
“ school in metaphysics, though I admired his  
“ poetry; not but what he has changed his mode  
“ of thinking very much since he wrote the  
“ Notes to ‘Queen Mab,’ which I was accused of  
“ having a hand in. I know, however, that I am  
“ considered an infidel. My wife and sister,  
“ when they joined parties, sent me prayer-books.

“ There was a Mr. Mulock, who went about the  
“ Continent preaching orthodoxy in politics and  
“ religion, a writer of bad sonnets, and a lecturer  
“ in worse prose,—he tried to convert me to some  
“ new sect of Christianity. He was a great anti-  
“ materialist, and abused Locke.”

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On another occasion he said :

“ I am always getting new correspondents.  
“ Here are three letters just arrived, from stran-  
“ gers all of them. One is from a French woman,  
“ who has been writing to me off and on for the  
“ last three years. She is not only a blue-bottle,  
“ but a poetess, I suspect. Her object in address-  
“ ing me now, she says, is to get me to write on  
“ the loss of a slave-ship, the particulars of which  
“ she details.

“ The second epistle is short, and in a hand I  
“ know very well: it is anonymous too. Hear  
“ what she says: ‘ I cannot longer exist without  
“ acknowledging the tumultuous and agonizing

“ delight with which my soul burns at the glowing  
“ beauties of yours.’

“ A third is of a very different character from  
“ the last ; it is from a Mr. Sheppard, inclosing a  
“ prayer made for my welfare by his wife a few  
“ days before her death. The letter states that  
“ he has had the misfortune to lose this amiable  
“ woman, who had seen me at Ramsgate, many  
“ years ago, rambling among the cliffs ; that she  
“ had been impressed with a sense of my irreligion  
“ from the tenor of my works, and had often  
“ prayed fervently for my conversion, particularly  
“ in her last moments. The prayer is beautifully  
“ written. I like devotion in women. She must  
“ have been a divine creature. I pity the man  
“ who has lost her ! I shall write to him by return  
“ of the courier, to condole with him, and  
“ tell him that Mrs. S—— need not have entertained  
“ any concern for my spiritual affairs, for  
“ that no man is more of a Christian than I am,  
“ whatever my writings may have led her and  
“ others to suspect.”

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JANUARY.

“ A circumstance took place in Greece that  
“ impressed itself lastingly on my memory. I had  
“ once thought of founding a tale on it ; but the  
“ subject is too harrowing for any nerves,—too  
“ terrible for any pen ! An order was issued at  
“ Zanina by its sanguinary Rajah, that any Turk-  
“ ish woman convicted of incontinence with a  
“ Christian should be stoned to death ! Love is  
“ slow at calculating dangers, and defies tyrants  
“ and their edicts ; and many were the victims to  
“ the savage barbarity of this of Ali’s. Among  
“ others a girl of sixteen, of a beauty such as that  
“ country only produces, fell under the vigilant  
“ eye of the police. She was suspected, and not  
“ without reason, of carrying on a secret intrigue  
“ with a Neapolitan of some rank, whose long  
“ stay in the city could be attributed to no other  
“ cause than this attachment. Her crime ( if  
“ crime it be to love as they loved) was too fully  
“ proved ; they were torn from each other’s arms,  
“ never to meet again : and yet both might have  
“ escaped,—she by abjuring her religion, or he by  
“ adopting hers. They resolutely refused to be-

“ come apostates to their faith. Ali Pacha was  
“ never known to pardon. She was stoned by  
“ those demons, although in the fourth month  
“ of her pregnancy ! He was sent to a town where  
“ the plague was raging, and died, happy in not  
“ having long outlived the object of his affec-  
“ tions !

“ One of the principal incidents in ‘The Giaour’  
“ is derived from a real occurrence, and one too  
“ in which I myself was nearly and deeply in-  
“ terested ; but an unwillingness to have it con-  
“ sidered a traveller’s tale made me suppress the  
“ fact of its genuineness. The Marquis of Sligo,  
“ who knew the particulars of the story, re-  
“ minded me of them in England, and wondered  
“ I had not authenticated them in the Preface :—

“ When I was at Athens, there was an edict in  
“ force similar to that of Ali’s, except that the  
“ mode of punishment was different. It was ne-  
“ cessary, therefore, that all love-affairs should be  
“ carried on with the greatest privacy. I was very  
“ fond at that time of a Turkish girl,—ay, fond of

“ her as I have been of few women. All went  
“ on very well till the Ramazan for forty days,  
“ which is rather a long fast for lovers : all inter-  
“ course between the sexes is forbidden by law,  
“ as well as by religion. During this Lent of the  
“ Musselmans, the women are not allowed to quit  
“ their apartments. I was in despair, and could  
“ hardly contrive to get a cinder, or a token-  
“ flower sent to express it. We had not met for  
“ several days, and all my thoughts were occu-  
“ pied in planning an assignation, when, as ill  
“ fate would have it, the means I took to effect it  
“ led to the discovery of our secret. The penalty  
“ was death,—death without reprieve,—a hor-  
“ rible death, at which one cannot think without  
“ shuddering ! An order was issued for the law  
“ being put into immediate effect. In the mean  
“ time I knew nothing of what had happened,  
“ and it was determined that I should be kept in  
“ ignorance of the whole affair till it was too late  
“ to interfere. A mere accident only enabled me  
“ to prevent the completion of the sentence. I  
“ was taking one of my usual evening rides by the  
“ sea-side, when I observed a crowd of people



“ moving down to the shore, and the arms of the  
“ soldiers glittering among them. They were not  
“ so far off, but that I thought I could now and  
“ then distinguish a faint and stifled shriek. My  
“ curiosity was forcibly excited, and I dispatched  
“ one of my followers to inquire the cause of the  
“ procession. What was my horror to learn that  
“ they were carrying an unfortunate girl, sewn up  
“ in a sack, to be thrown into the sea ! I did not  
“ hesitate as to what was to be done. I knew I  
“ could depend on my faithful Albanians, and  
“ rode up to the officer commanding the party,  
“ threatening, in case of his refusal to give up his  
“ prisoner, that I would adopt means to compel  
“ him. He did not like the business he was on,  
“ or perhaps the determined look of my body-  
“ guard, and consented to accompany me back  
“ to the city with the girl, whom I soon disco-  
“ vered to be my Turkish favourite. Suffice it to  
“ say, that my interference with the chief magis-  
“ trate, backed by a heavy bribe, saved her ; but  
“ it was only on condition that I should break off  
“ all intercourse with her, and that she should  
“ immediately quit Athens, and he sent to her

“ friends in Thebes. There she died, a few days  
“ after her arrival, of a fever—perhaps of love.”

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“ The severest fever I ever had was at Patras.  
“ I had left Fletcher at Constantinople—convalescent, but unable to move from weakness,  
“ and had no attendants but my Albanians, to  
“ whom I owe my life.

“ They were devotedly attached to me, and  
“ watched me day and night. I am more indebted  
“ to a good constitution for having got over this attack, than to the drugs of an ignorant Turk, who  
“ called himself a physician. He would have been  
“ glad to have disowned the name, and resigned  
“ his profession too, if he could have escaped  
“ from the responsibility of attending me; for my  
“ Albanians came the Grand Signior over him, and  
“ threatened that if I were not entirely recovered  
“ at a certain hour on a certain day, they would  
“ take his life. They are not people to make idle  
“ threats, and would have carried them into execution had any thing happened to me. You may

“ imagine the fright the poor devil of a Doctor was  
“ in ; and I could not help smiling at the ludi-  
“ crous way in which his fears shewed them-  
“ selves. I believe he was more pleased at my reco-  
“ very than either my faithful nurses or myself.  
“ I had no intention of dying at that time ; but if  
“ I had died, the same story would have been told  
“ of me as was related to have happened to Colo-  
“ nel Sherbrooke in America. On the very day my  
“ fever was at the highest, a friend of mine de-  
“ clared that he saw me in St. James’s Street ;  
“ and somebody put my name down in the book  
“ at the palace, as having inquired after the  
“ King’s health.

“ Every body would have said that my ghost  
had appeared.”

“ But how were they to have reconciled a  
“ ghost’s writing?” asked I.

“ I should most likely have passed the re-  
“ mainder of my life in Turkey, if I had not  
“ been called home by my mother’s death and

“ my affairs,” said he. “ I mean to return to  
“ Greece, and shall in all probability die there.”

Little did I think, at the time he was pronouncing these words, that they were prophetic!

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“ I became a member of Drury-lane Com-  
“ mittee, at the request of my friend Douglas  
“ Kinnaird, who made over to me a share of  
“ 500*l.* for the purpose of qualifying me to  
“ vote. One need have other qualifications be-  
“ sides money for that office. I found the em-  
“ ployment not over pleasant, and not a little  
“ dangerous, what with Irish authors and  
“ pretty poetesses. Five hundred plays were  
“ offered to the Theatre during the year I was  
“ Literary Manager. You may conceive that it  
“ was no small task to read all this trash, and  
“ to satisfy the bards that it was so.

“ When I first entered upon theatrical af-  
“ fairs, I had some idea of writing for the

“ house myself, but soon became a convert to  
“ Pope’s opinion on that subject. Who would  
“ condescend to the drudgery of the stage, and  
“ enslave himself to the humours, the caprices,  
“ the taste or tastelessness, of the age? Besides,  
“ one must write for particular actors, have  
“ them continually in one’s eye, sacrifice cha-  
“ racter to the personating of it, cringe to some  
“ favourite of the public, neither give him too  
“ many nor too few lines to spout, think how  
“ he would mouth such and such a sentence,  
“ look such and such a passion, strut such and  
“ such a scene. Who, I say, would submit to  
“ all this? Shakspeare had many advantages :  
“ he was an actor by profession, and knew all  
“ the tricks of the trade. Yet he had but little  
“ fame in his day : see what Jonson and his con-  
“ temporaries said of him. Besides, how few  
“ of what are called Shakspeare’s plays are exclu-  
“ sively so !—and how, at this distance of time,  
“ and lost as so many works of that period  
“ are, can we separate what really is from  
“ what is not his own?

“ The players retrenched, transposed, and even  
“ altered the text, to suit the audience or please  
“ themselves. Who knows how much rust they  
“ rubbed off? I am sure there is rust and  
“ base metal to spare left in the old plays.  
“ When Leigh Hunt comes we shall have bat-  
“ tles enough about those old *ruffiani*, the old  
“ dramatists, with their tiresome conceits, their  
“ jingling rhymes, and endless play upon words.  
“ It is but lately that people have been satis-  
“ fied that Shakspeare was not a god, nor stood  
“ alone in the age in which he lived ; and yet  
“ how few of the plays, even of that boasted time,  
“ have survived, and fewer still are now acted!  
“ Let us count them. Only one of Massinger’s  
“ (New Way to pay Old Debts), one of Ford’s,\* one of  
“ Ben Jonson’s,\* and half-a-dozen of Shakspeare’s;  
“ and of these last, ‘ The Two Gentlemen of Ve-  
“ rona’ and ‘ The Tempest’ have been turned in-  
“ to operas. You cannot call that having a theatre.  
“ Now that Kemble has left the stage, who will

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\* Of which I have forgot the name he mentioned.

“ endure Coriolanus? Lady Macbeth died with  
“ Mrs. Siddons, and Polonius will with Munden.  
“ Shakspeare’s Comedies are quite out of date ;  
“ many of them are insufferable to read, much  
“ more to see. They are gross food, only fit for  
“ an English or German palate ; they are indi-  
“ gestible to the French and Italians, the po-  
“ litest people in the world. One can hardly  
“ find ten lines together without some gross vio-  
“ lation of taste or decency. What do you think  
“ of Bottom in the ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream?’  
“ or of ‘Troilus and Cressida’ *passim*?”

Here I could not help interrupting him by saying, “ You have named the two plays that, with all their faults, contain, perhaps, some of the finest poetry.”

“ Yes,” said he, “ in ‘Troilus and Cressida :’

“ ——— ‘Prophet may you be !

“ If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth.

“ When Time is old, and hath forgot itself,

“ When water-drops have worn the stones of Troy,

- “ And blind Oblivion swallow’d cities up,  
“ And mighty states characterless are grated  
“ To dusty nothing,—yet let memory  
“ From false to false, among false maids in love,  
“ Upbraid my falsehood ! when they’ve said,—As false  
“ As air, as water, wind, or sandy earth,  
“ As fox to lamb, as wolf to heifer’s calf,  
“ Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son;  
“ Yea, let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood—  
“ As false as Cressid ! ’”

These lines he pronounced with great emphasis and effect, and continued :

- “ But what has poetry to do with a play, or in  
“ a play ? There is not one passage in Alfieri  
“ strictly poetical ; hardly one in Racine.”

Here he handed me a prospectus of a new translation of Shakspeare into French prose, and read part of the first scene in ‘ The Tempest,’ laughing inwardly, as he was used to do ; and afterwards produced a passage from Chateaubriand, contending that we have no theatre.



“ The French very properly ridicule our bring-  
“ ing in ‘ *un enfant au premier acte, barbon au*  
“ *dernier.*’ I was always a friend to the unities,  
“ and believe that subjects are not wanting which  
“ may be treated in strict conformity to their  
“ rules. No one can be absurd enough to con-  
“ tend, that the preservation of the unities is a  
“ defect,—at least a fault. Look at Alfieri’s plays,  
“ and tell me what is wanting in them. Does he  
“ ever deviate from the rules prescribed by the  
“ ancients, from the classical simplicity of the  
“ old models? It is very difficult, almost impos-  
“ sible, to write any thing to please a modern  
“ audience. I was instrumental in getting up  
“ ‘ *Bertram,*’ and it was said that I wrote part of  
“ it myself. That was not the case. I knew  
“ Maturin to be a needy man, and interested  
“ myself in his success : but his life was very feeble  
“ and rickety. I once thought of getting Joanna  
“ Baillie’s ‘ *De Montfort*’ revived ; but the wind-  
“ ing-up was faulty. She was herself aware of  
“ this, and wrote the last act over again ; and  
“ yet, after all, it failed. She must have been  
“ dreadfully annoyed, even more than Lady ——

“ was. When it was bringing out, I was applied  
 “ to, to write a prologue ; but as the request did  
 “ not come from Kean, who was to speak it, I  
 “ declined. There are fine things in all the Plays  
 “ on the Passions : an idea in ‘ De Montfort’  
 “ struck me particularly ; one of the characters  
 “ said that he knew the footsteps of another.\*

“ There are four words in Alfieri that speak  
 “ volumes. They are in ‘ Don Carlos.’ The King  
 “ and his Minister are secreted during an inter-  
 “ view of the Infant with the Queen Consort : the  
 “ following dialogue passes, which ends the scene.  
 “ ‘ *Vedesti ? Vedi. Udisti ? Udi.*’ All the dra-  
 “ matic beauty would be lost in translation—  
 “ the nominative cases would kill it. Nothing  
 “ provokes me so much as the squeamishness  
 “ that excludes the exhibition of many such sub-

\* “ *De Montfort.*—’Tis Rezenvelt : I heard his well-known foot!

“ From the first staircase, mounting step by step.

“ *Freberg.*—How quick an ear thou hast for distant sound!

“ I heard him not.”

Act II. Scene 2.

jects from the stage ;—a squeamishness, the  
produce, as I firmly believe, of a lower tone of  
the moral sense, and foreign to the majestic  
and confident virtue of the golden age of our  
country. All is now cant—methodistical cant.  
Shame flies from the heart, and takes refuge in  
the lips ; or, our senses and nerves are much  
more refined than those of our neighbours.

We should not endure the OEdipus story,  
nor ‘ Phèdre.’ ‘ Myrrha,’ the best worked-up,  
perhaps, of all Alfieri’s tragedies, and a fa-  
vourite in Italy, would not be tolerated. ‘ The  
Mysterious Mother’ has never been acted, nor  
Massinger’s ‘ Brother and Sister.’ Webster’s  
‘ Duchess of Malfy’ would be too harrowing :  
her madness, the dungeon-scene, and her grim  
talk with her keepers and coffin-bearers, could  
not be borne : nor Lillo’s ‘ Fatal Marriage.’  
The ‘ Cenci’ is equally horrible, though per-  
haps the best tragedy modern times have pro-  
duced. It is a play,—not a poem, like ‘ Re-  
morse’ and ‘ Fazio ;’ and the best proof of its  
merit is, that people are continually quoting it.

“What may not be expected from such a beginning?”

“The Germans are colder and more phlegmatic than we are, and bear even to see ‘Werner.’”

“To write any thing to please, at the present day, is the despair of authors.”

It was easy to be perceived that during this tirade upon the stage, and against Shakspeare, he was smarting under the ill-reception ‘Marino Fallerio’ had met with, and indignant at the Critics, who had denied him the dramatic faculty. This, however, was not the only occasion of his abusing the old dramatists.

Some days after I revived the subject of the drama, and led him into speaking of his own plays.

“I have just got a letter,” said he, “from Murray. What do you think he has enclosed me? A long dull extract from that long dull Latin epic of Petrarch’s, *Africa*, which he has the modes-

“ ty to ask me to translate for Ugo Foscolo, who  
“ is writing some Memoirs of Petrarch, and has  
“ got Moore, Lady Dacre, etc. to contribute to.  
“ What am I to do with the death of Mago? I wish  
“ to God, Medwin, you would take it home with  
“ you, and translate it; and I will send it to  
“ Murray. We will say nothing about its being  
“ yours, or mine; and it will be curious to hear  
“ Foscolo’s opinion upon it. Depend upon it, it  
“ will not be an unfavorable one.”

In the course of the day I turned it into couplets,  
(and lame enough they were,) which he forwarded  
by the next courier to England.

Almost by return of post arrived a furiously  
complimentary epistle in acknowledgment, which  
made us laugh very heartily.

“ There are three good lines,”\* said Lord Byron,  
“ in Mago’s speech, which may be thus translated:

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\* Ugo Foscolo afterwards took them for his motto.

“ ‘Yet, thing of dust !

“ Man strives to climb the earth in his ambition,

“ Till death, the monitor that flatters not,

“ Points to the grave where all his hopes are laid.’ ”

“ What do you think of Ada ? ” said he, looking earnestly at his daughter’s miniature, that hung by the side of his writing-table. “ They  
“ tell me she is like me—but she has her mother’s  
“ eyes.

“ It is very odd that my mother was an only  
“ child ;—I am an only child ; my wife is an only  
“ child ; and Ada is an only child. It is a singular  
“ coincidence ; that is the least that can be said of  
“ it. I can’t help thinking it was destined to be  
“ so ; and perhaps it is best. I was once anxious  
“ for a son ; but, after our separation, was glad  
“ to have had a daughter ; for it would have  
“ distressed me too much to have taken him away  
“ from Lady Byron, and I could not have trusted  
“ her with a son’s education. I have no idea of  
“ boys being brought up by mothers. I suffered  
“ too much from that myself : and then, wander-  
“ ing about the world as I do, I could not take

“ proper care of a child ; otherwise I should not  
“ have left Allegra, poor little thing !\* at Ravenna.  
“ She as been a great resource to me, though I  
“ am not so fond of her as of Ada ; and yet I mean  
“ to make their fortunes equal—there will be  
“ enough for them both. I have desired in my  
“ will that Allegra shall not marry an Englishman.  
“ The Irish and Scotch make better husbands than  
“ we do. You will think it was an odd fancy, but  
“ I was not in the best of humours with my  
“ countrymen at that moment—you know the  
“ reason. I am told that Ada is a little termagant ;  
“ I hope not. I shall write to my sister to know  
“ if this is the case : perhaps I am wrong in  
“ letting Lady Byron have entirely her own way  
“ in her education. I hear that my name is not  
“ mentioned in her presence ; that a green curtain  
“ is always kept over my portrait, as over some-  
“ thing forbidden ; and that she is not to know

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\* She appears to be the Leila of his Don Juan :

“ Poor little thing ! She was as fair as docile,

“ And with that gentle, serious character——”

*Don Juan*, Canto X. Stanza 52.

“ that she has a father, till she comes of age. Of  
“ course she will be taught to hate me ; she will  
“ be brought up to it. Lady Byron is conscious  
“ of all this, and is afraid that I shall some day  
“ carry off her daughter by stealth or force. I  
“ might claim her of the Chancellor, without hav-  
“ ing recourse to either one or the other. But I  
“ had rather be unhappy myself, than make her  
“ mother so ; probably I shall never see her  
“ again.”

Here he opened his writing-desk, and shewed me some hair, which he told me was his child's.

During our drive and ride this evening, he declined our usual amusement of pistol-firing, without assigning a cause. He hardly spoke a word during the first half-hour, and it was evident that something weighed heavily on his mind. There was a sacredness in his melancholy that I dared not interrupt. At length he said :

“ This is Ada's birthday, and might have been  
“ the happiest day of my life : as it is————!”



He stopped, seemingly ashamed of having betrayed his feelings. He tried in vain to rally his spirits by turning the conversation; but he created a laugh in which he could not join, and soon relapsed into his former reverie. It lasted till we came within a mile of the Argine gate. There our silence was all at once interrupted by shrieks that seemed to proceed from a cottage by the side of the road. We pulled up our horses, to inquire of a *contadino* standing at the little garden-wicket. He told us that a widow had just lost her only child, and that the sounds proceeded from the wailings of some women over the corpse. Lord Byron was much affected; and his superstition, acted upon by a sadness that seemed to be presentiment, led him to augur some disaster.

“ I shall not be happy,” said he, “ till I hear  
“ that my daughter is well. I have a great horror  
“ of anniversaries: people only laugh at, who  
“ have never kept a register of them. I always  
“ write to my sister on Ada’s birthday. I did so  
“ last year; and, what was very remarkable, my  
“ letter reached her on my wedding-day, and her

“ answer reached me at Ravenna on my birthday !  
“ Several extraordinary things have happened to  
“ me on my birthday ; so they did to Napoleon ;  
“ and a more wonderful circumstance still occurred to Marie Antoinette.”

The next morning's courier brought him a letter from England. He gave it me as I entered, and said :

“ I was convinced something very unpleasant  
“ hung over me last night : I expected to hear  
“ that somebody I knew was dead ;—so it turns  
“ out ! Poor Polidori is gone ! When he was  
“ my physician, he was always talking of Prussic  
“ acid, oil of amber, blowing into veins, suffocating by charcoal, and compounding poisons ;  
“ but for a different purpose to what the Pontic  
“ Monarch did, for he has prescribed a dose for  
“ himself that would have killed fifty Miltiades,  
“ —a dose whose effect, Murray says, was so  
“ instantaneous that he went off without a spasm  
“ or struggle. It seems that disappointment was  
“ the cause of this rash act. He had entertained

“ too sanguine hopes of literary fame, owing to  
“ the success of his ‘ Vampyre,’ which, in conse-  
“ quence of its being attributed to me, was got  
“ up as a melo-drame at Paris. The foundation  
“ of the story *was* mine ; but I was forced to  
“ disown the publication, lest the world should  
“ suppose that I had vanity enough, or was egotist  
“ enough, to write in that ridiculous manner  
“ about myself.\* Notwithstanding which, the  
“ French editions still persevere in including it  
“ with my works. My real ‘ Vampyre’ I gave at  
“ the end of ‘ Mazeppa,’ something in the same  
“ way that I told it one night at Diodati, when  
“ Monk Lewis, and Shelley and his wife, were  
“ present. The latter sketched on that occasion  
“ the outline of her Pygmalion story, ‘ The Mo-  
“ dern Prometheus,’ the making of a man (which  
“ a lady who had read it afterwards asked Sir  
“ Humphrey Davy, to his great astonishment, if  
“ he could do, Lewis told a story something like  
“ Alonzo and Imogene); and Shelley himself, or

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\* He alluded to the Preface and the Postscript, containing accounts of his residence at Geneva and in the Isle of Mitylene.

“ ‘The Snake,’ (as he used sometimes to call him,)”  
“ conjured up some frightful woman of an acquaintance of his at home, a kind of Medusa, who was suspected of having eyes in her”  
“ breasts.

“ Perhaps Polidori had strictly no right to appropriate my story to himself; but it was hardly”  
“ worth it: and when my letter, disclaiming the”  
“ narrative part, was written, I dismissed the matter from my memory. It was Polidori’s own”  
“ fault that we did not agree. I was sorry when”  
“ we parted, for I soon get attached to people;”  
“ and was more sorry still for the scrape he afterwards got into at Milan. He quarrelled with”  
“ one of the guards at the Scala, and was ordered”  
“ to leave the Lombard States twenty-four hours”  
“ after; which put an end to all his Continental”  
“ schemes, that I had forwarded by recommending him to Lord ———; and it is difficult for a”  
“ young physician to get into practice at home,”  
“ however clever, particularly a foreigner, or one”  
“ with a foreigner’s name. From that time,”  
“ instead of making out prescriptions, he took to

“ writing romances ; a very unprofitable and fatal  
“ exchange, as it turned out.

“ I told you I was not oppressed in spirits last  
“ night without a reason. Who can help being  
“ superstitious ? Scott believes in second-sight.  
“ Rousseau tried whether he was to be d—d or  
“ not, by aiming at a tree with a stone : I forget  
“ whether he hit or missed. Goëthe trusted to  
“ the chance of a knife’s striking the water, to de-  
“ termine whether he was to prosper in some un-  
“ dertaking. The Italians think the dropping of  
“ oil very unlucky. Pietro (Count Gamba) dropped  
“ some the night before his exile, and that of his  
“ family, from Ravenna. Have you ever had  
“ your fortune told ? Mrs. Williams told mine.  
“ She predicted that twenty-seven and thirty-  
“ seven were to be dangerous ages in my life.\*  
“ One has come true. ”

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\* He was married in his twenty-seventh, and died in his thirty-seventh year.

“Yes,” added I, “and did she not prophecy that you were to die a monk and a miser? I have been told so.”

“I don’t think these two last very likely; but it was part of her prediction. But there are lucky and unlucky days, as well as years and numbers too. Lord —— was dining at a party, where —— observed that they were thirteen. “Why don’t you make us twelve?” was the reply; and an impudent one it was—but he could say those things. You would not visit on a Friday, would you? You know you are to introduce me to Mrs. ——. It must not be to-morrow, for it is a Friday.”

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“A fine day,” said I, as I entered; “a day worth living for.”

“An old hag of a world!” replied he, shaking me by the hand. “You should have been here earlier. T—— has been here with a most portentous and obstetrical countenance, and it

“ seems he has been bringing forth an ode—a  
 “ birthday *ode*—not on Ada, but on a lady. An  
 “ *odious* production it must have been! ” He threa-  
 “ tened to inflict, as Shelley calls it; but I fought  
 “ off. As I told him, Stellas are out of date now :  
 “ it is a bad compliment to remind women of  
 “ their age.

“ Talking of days, this is the most wretched  
 “ day of my existence ; and I say and do all sorts  
 “ of foolish things\* to drive away the memory of  
 “ it, and make me forget.

“ I will give you a specimen of some epigrams I

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\* “ So that it wean me from the weary dream  
 “ Of selfish grief, or gladness!—so it fling  
 “ Forgetfulness around me!”

*Childe Harold*, Canto III. Stanza 4.

“ And if I laugh at any mortal thing,  
 “ ’Tis that I may not weep ;—and if I weep,  
 “ ’Tis that our nature cannot always bring  
 “ Itself to apathy ——” etc.

*Don Juan*, Canto IV. Stanza 4.

“ am in the habit of sending Hobhouse, to whom  
“ I wrote on my first wedding-day, and continue  
“ to write still :

“ This day of ours has surely done

“ Its worst for me and you !

“ Tis now *five* years since we were *one*,

“ And *four* since we were *two*.

“ And another on his sending me the congratula-  
“ tions of the season, which ended in some fool-  
“ ish way like this :

“ You may wish me returns of the season :

“ Let us, prithee, have none of the day !

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I think I can give no stronger proof of the sociability of Lord Byron's disposition, than the festivity that presided over his dinners.

Wednesday being one of his fixed days : “ You  
“ will dine with me,” said he, “ though it is the  
“ 2d of January.”



His own table, when alone, was frugal, not to say abstemious;\* but on the occasion of these meetings every sort of wine, every luxury of the season, and English delicacy, were displayed. I never knew any man do the honours of his house with greater kindness and hospitality. On this eventful anniversary, he was not, however, in his usual spirits, and evidently tried to drown the remembrance of the day by a levity that was forced and unnatural;—for it was clear, in spite of all his efforts, that something oppressed him, and he could not help continually recurring to the subject.

One of the party proposed Lady Byron's health, which he gave with evident pleasure, and we al.

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\* His dinner, when alone, cost five Pauls; and thinking he was overcharged, he gave his bills to a lady of my acquaintance to examine.† At a Christmas-day dinner he had ordered a plum-pudding *à l'Anglaise*. Somebody afterwards told him it was not good. "Not good!" said he: "why, it ought to be good; it cost fifteen Pauls."

† He ordered the remnants to be given away, lest his servants (as he said) should envy him every mouthful he ate.

drank in bumpers. The conversation turning on his separation, the probability of their being reconciled was canvassed.

“What!” said he, “after having lost the five  
“best years of our lives?—Never! But,” added  
he, “it was no fault of mine that we quarrelled.  
“I have made advances enough. I had once an  
“idea that people are happiest in the marriage  
“state, after the impetuosity of the passions has  
“subsided,—but that hope is all over with me!”

Writing to a friend the day after our party, I finished my letter with the following remark :

“Notwithstanding the tone of raillery with which he sometimes speaks in ‘Don Juan’ of his separation from Lady Byron, and his saying, as he did to-day, that the only thing he thanks Lady Byron for is, that he cannot marry, etc., it is evident that it is the thorn in his side—the poison in his cup of life! The veil is easily seen through. He endeavours to mask his griefs, and to fill up the void of his heart, by assuming a gaiety that

does not belong to it. All the tender and endearing ties of social and domestic life rudely torn asunder, he has been wandering on from place to place, without finding any to rest in. Switzerland, Venice, Ravenna, (and I might even have added Tuscany,) were doomed to be no asylum for him," etc.

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I observed himself and all his servants in deep mourning. He did not wait for me to inquire the cause.

"I have just heard," said he, "of Lady Noel's death. I am distressed for poor Lady Byron! She must be in great affliction, for she adored her mother! The world will think I am pleased at this event, but they are much mistaken. I never wished for an accession of fortune; I have enough without the Wentworth property. I have written a letter of condolence to Lady Byron,—you may suppose in the kindest terms,—beginning, 'My dear Lady Byron,

" 'If we are not reconciled, it is not my fault!'"

“ I shall be delighted,” I said, “ to see you restored to her and to your country; which, notwithstanding all you say and write against it, I am sure you like. Do you remember a sentiment in the ‘ Two Foscari ? ’ ”

‘ He who loves *not* his country, can love nothing.’

“ I am becoming more weaned from it every day,” said he after a pause, “ and have had enough to wean me from it!—No! Lady Byron will not make it up with me now, lest the world should say that her mother only was to blame! Lady Noel certainly identifies herself very strongly in the quarrel, even by the account of her last injunctions; for she directs in her will that my portrait, shut up in a case by her orders, shall not be opened till her grand-daughter be of age, and then not given to her if Lady Byron should be alive.

“ I might have claimed all the fortune for my life, if I had chosen to have done so; but have agreed to leave the division of it to Lord Dacre

“ and Sir Francis Burdett. The whole manage-  
“ ment of the affair is confided to them ; and I  
“ shall not interfere, or make any suggestion, or  
“ objection, if they award Lady Byron the whole.”

I asked him how he became entitled?

“ The late Lord Wentworth,” said he, “ be-  
“ queathed a life interest in his Lancashire es-  
“ tates to Lady Byron’s mother, and afterwards  
“ to her daughter : that is the way I claim.”

Some time after, when the equal partition had been settled, he said :

“ I have offered Lady Byron the family mansion  
“ in addition to the award, but she has declined  
“ it : this is not kind.”

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The conversation turned after dinner on the lyrical poetry of the day, and a question arose as to which was the most perfect ode that had been produced. Shelley contended for Coleridge’s on

Switzerland, beginning, "Ye clouds," etc.; others named some of Moore's Irish Melodies, and Campbell's Hohenlinden; and, had Lord Byron not been present, his own Invocation to Manfred, or Ode to Napoleon, or on Prometheus, might have been cited.

"Like Gray," said he, "Campbell smells too much of the oil: he is never satisfied with what he does; his finest things have been spoiled by over-polish—the sharpness of the outline is worn off. Like paintings, poems may be too highly finished. The great art is effect, no matter how produced.

"I will shew you an ode you have never seen, that I consider little inferior to the best which the present prolific age has brought forth." With this he left the table, almost before the cloth was removed, and returned with a magazine, from which he read the following lines on Sir John Moore's burial, which perhaps require no apology for finding a place here:

“ Not a drum was heard, nor a funeral note,  
“ As his corse to the ramparts we hurried ;  
“ Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot  
“ O’er the grave where our hero we buried.

“ We buried him darkly at dead of night,  
“ The sods with our bayonets turning,—  
“ By the struggling moonbeam’s misty light,  
“ And the lantern dimly burning.

“ No useless coffin confined his breast,  
“ Nor in sheet nor in shroud we bound him,  
“ But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,  
“ With his martial cloak around him.

“ Few and short were the prayers we said,  
“ And we spoke not a word of sorrow ;  
“ But we stedfastly gazed on the face of the dead,  
“ And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

“ We thought, as we heap’d his narrow bed,  
“ And smooth’d down his lonely pillow,  
“ That the foe and the stranger would tread o’er his head  
“ And we far away on the billow !

“ Lightly they’ll talk of the spirit that’s gone,  
“ And o’er his cold ashes upbraid him ;  
“ But nothing he ’ll reck, if they let him sleep on  
“ In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

“ But half of our heavy task was done,  
“ When the clock told the hour for retiring ;  
“ And we heard by the distant and random gun,  
“ That the foe was suddenly firing.

“ Slowly and sadly we laid him down,  
“ From the field of his fame fresh and gory ;  
“ We carved not a line, we raised not a stone,  
“ But we left him alone with his glory.”

The feeling with which he recited these admirable stanzas, I shall never forget. After he had come to an end, he repeated the third, and said it was perfect, particularly the lines

“ But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,  
“ With his martial cloak around him.”

“ I should have taken,” said Shelley, “ the whole for a rough sketch of Campbell’s.”



“No,” replied Lord Byron : “Campbell would have claimed it, if it had been his.”

I afterwards had reason to think that the ode was Lord Byron's ; \* that he was piqued at none of his own being mentioned ; and, after he had praised the verses so highly, could not own them. No other reason can be assigned for his not acknowledging himself the author, particularly as he was a great admirer of General Moore.

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Talking after dinner of swimming, he said :—

“Murray published a letter I wrote to him from Venice, which might have seemed an idle display of vanity ; but the object of my writing it was to contradict what Turner had asserted about the impossibility of crossing the Hellespont

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\* I am corroborated in this opinion lately by a lady, whose brother received them many years ago from Lord Byron, in his Lordship's own hand-writing.

“ from the Abydos to the Sestos side, in consequence of the tide.

“ One is as easy as the other ; we did both.” Here he turned round to Fletcher, to whom he occasionally referred, and said, “ Fletcher, how far was it Mr. Ekenhead and I swam ?” Fletcher replied, “ Three miles and a half, my Lord.” (Of course he did not diminish the distance.) “ The real width of the Hellespont,” resumed Lord Byron, is not much above a mile ; but the current is prodigiously strong, and we were carried down notwithstanding all our efforts. “ I don’t know how Leander contrived to stem the stream, and steer straight across ; but nothing is impossible in love or religion. If I had had a Hero on the other side, perhaps I should have worked harder. We were to have undertaken this feat some time before, but put it off in consequence of the coldness of the water ; and it was chilly enough when we performed it. I know I should have made a bad Leander, for it gave me an ague that I did not so easily get rid of. There were some sailors

“ in the fleet who swam further than I did—I do  
“ not say than I could have done, for it is the  
“ only exercise I pride myself upon, being almost  
“ amphibious.

“ I remember being at Brighton many years  
“ ago, and having great difficulty in making the  
“ land,—the wind blowing off the shore, and the  
“ tide setting out. Crowds of people were col-  
“ lected on the beach to see us. Mr. —— (I think  
“ he said Hobhouse) was with me ; and,” he  
added, “ I had great difficulty in saving him—he  
“ nearly drowned me.

“ When I was at Venice, there was an Italian  
“ who knew no more of swimming than a camel,  
“ but he had heard of my prowess in the Darda-  
“ nelles , and challenged me. Not wishing that  
“ any foreigner at least should beat me at my own  
“ arms, I consented to engage in the contest.  
“ Alexander Scott proposed to be of the party, and  
“ we started from Lido. Our land-lubber was  
“ very soon in the rear, and Scott saw him make  
“ for a Gondola. He rested himself first against

“ one, and then against another, and gave in  
“ before we got half way to St. Mark’s Place. We  
“ saw no more of him, but continued our course  
“ through the Grand Canal, landing at my palace-  
“ stairs. The water of the Lagunes is dull, and  
“ not very clear or agreeable to bathe in. I can  
“ keep myself up for hours in the sea : I delight  
“ in it, and come out with a buoyancy of spirits I  
“ never feel on any other occasion.

“ If I believed in the transmigration of your  
“ *Hindoos*, I should think I had been a *Merman*  
“ in some former state of existence, or was going  
“ to be turned into one in the next.”

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“ When I published ‘ *Marino Faliero* ’ I had not  
“ the most distant view to the stage. My object  
“ in choosing that historical subject was to record  
“ one of the most remarkable incidents in the an-  
“ nals of the Venetian Republic, embodying it in  
“ what I considered the most interesting form—  
“ dialogue, and giving my work the accompani-  
“ ments of scenery and manners studied on the

“ spot. That Faliero should, for a slight to a  
“ woman, become a traitor to his country, and  
“ conspire to massacre all his fellow-nobles, and  
“ that the young Foscari should have a sickly  
“ affection for his native city, were no inventions  
“ of mine. I painted the men as I found them,  
“ as they were,—not as the critics would have  
“ them. I took the stories as they were handed  
“ down ; and if human nature is not the same  
“ in one country as it is in others, am I to blame?  
“ —can I help it? But no painting; however  
“ highly coloured, can give an idea of the intensity  
“ of a Venetian’s affection for his native city.  
“ Shelley, I remember, draws a very beautiful  
“ picture of the tranquil pleasures of Venice in a  
“ poem\* which he has not published, and in

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\* The lines to which Lord Byron referred are these :

“ If I had been an unconnected man,  
“ I from this moment should have form’d the plan  
“ Never to leave fair Venice—for to me  
“ It was delight to ride by the lone sea;  
“ And then the town is silent—one may write  
“ Or read in gondolas by day or night,

“ which he does not make me cut a good figure.  
“ It describes an evening we passed together.

“ There was one mistake I committed : I should  
“ have called ‘ Marino Faliero’ and ‘ The Two  
“ Foscari’ dramas, historic poems, or any thing,  
“ in short, but tragedies or plays. In the first  
“ place, I was ill-used in the extreme by the Doge  
“ being brought on the stage at all, after my Pre-  
“ face. Then it consists of 3500 lines : \* a good  
“ acting play should not exceed 1500 or 1800 ;  
“ and, conformably with my plan, the materials  
“ could not have been compressed into so con-  
“ fined a space.

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“ Having the little brazen lamp alight,  
“ Unseen, uninterrupted : books are there,  
“ Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair  
“ Which were twin-born with poetry,—and all  
“ We seek in towns, with little to recall  
“ Regrets for the green country. I might sit  
“ In Maddalo’s great palace,” etc.

*Julian and Maddalo.*

\* He gave me the copy, with the number of lines marked with his own pencil. I have left it in England.

“ I remember Hogg the Ettrick Shepherd telling  
“ me, many years ago, that I should never be able  
“ to condense my powers of writing sufficiently for  
“ the stage, and that the fault of all my plays  
“ would be their being too long for acting. The  
“ remark occurred to me when I was about  
“ ‘ Marino Faliero ;’ but I thought it unnecessary  
“ to try and contradict his prediction, as I did not  
“ study stage-effect, and meant it solely for the  
“ closet. So much was I averse from its being  
“ acted, that, the moment I heard of the intention  
“ of the Managers, I applied for an injunction ;  
“ but the Chancellor refused to interfere, or issue  
“ an order for suspending the representation. It  
“ was a question of great importance in the lite-  
“ rary world of property. He would neither pro-  
“ tect me nor Murray. But the manner in which  
“ it was got up was shameful ! \* All the decla-  
“ matory parts were left, all the dramatic ones  
“ struck out ; and Cooper, the new actor, was the  
“ murderer of the whole. Lioni’s soliloquy, which

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\* Acted at Drury Lane, April 25, 1821.

“ I wrote one moonlight night after coming from  
“ the Benzon’s, ought to have been omitted al-  
“ together, or at all events much curtailed. What  
“ audience will listen with any patience to a mere  
“ tirade of poetry, which stops the march of the  
“ actor? No wonder, then, that the unhappy  
“ Doge should have been damned! But it was  
“ no very pleasant news for me; and the letter  
“ containing it was accompanied by another, to  
“ inform me that an old lady, from whom I had  
“ great expectations, was likely to live to an  
“ hundred. There is an autumnal shoot in some  
“ old people, as in trees; and I fancy her consti-  
“ tution has got some of the new sap. Well, on  
“ these two pleasant pieces of intelligence I wrote  
“ the following epigram, or elegy it may be  
“ termed, from the melancholy nature of the  
“ subject:—

“ Behold the blessings of a happy lot!

“ My play is damn’d, and Lady ——— not!

“ I understand that Louis Dix-huit, or *huitres*,  
“ as Moore spells it, has made a traduction of  
“ poor ‘Faliero;’ but I should hope it will not



“ be attempted on the *Théâtre Français*. It is  
“ quite enough for a man to be damned once.  
“ I was satisfied with Jeffrey’s critique \* on the  
“ play, for it abounded in extracts. He was wel-  
“ come to his own opinion,—which was fairly  
“ stated. His summing up in favour of my friend  
“ Sir Walter amused me : it reminded me of a  
“ schoolmaster, who, after flogging a bad boy,  
“ calls out the head of the class, and, patting  
“ him on the head, gives him all the sugar-plums.

“ The common trick of reviewers is, when they  
“ want to depreciate a work, to give no quota-  
“ tions from it. This is what ‘ The Quarterly’  
“ shines in ;—the way Milman put down Shelley,  
“ when he compared him to Pharaoh, and his  
“ works to his chariot-wheels, by what contor-  
“ tion of images I forget ;—but it reminds me

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\* “ However, I forgive him ; and I trust

“ He will forgive himself : if not, I must.

“ Old enemies who have become new friends,

“ Should so continue ;—’tis a point of honour.”

“ of another person’s comparing me in a poem  
“ to Jesus Christ, and telling me, when I ob-  
“ jected to its profanity, that he alluded to me  
“ in situation, not in person! ‘What!’ said I  
“ in reply, ‘would you have me crucified? We are  
“ not in Jerusalem, are we?’ But this is a long  
“ parenthesis. The Reviewers are like a counsel-  
“ lor, after an abusive speech, calling no wit-  
“ nesses to prove his assertions.

“ There are people who read nothing but these  
“ *trimestrials*, and swear by the *ipse dixit* of  
“ these autocrats—these Actæon hunters of lite-  
“ rature. They are fond of raising up and throw-  
“ ing down idols. ‘The Edinburgh’ did so with  
“ Walter Scott’s poetry, and, —perhaps there  
“ is no merit in my plays? It may be so; and  
“ Milman may be a great poet, if Heber is right  
“ and I am wrong. He has the dramatic fa-  
“ culty, and I have not. So they pretended to  
“ say of Milton. I am too happy in being coupled  
“ in any way with Milton, and shall be glad if  
“ they find any points of comparison between him  
“ and me.

“ But the praise or blame of Reviewers does  
“ not last long now-a-days. It is like straw  
“ thrown up in the air.\*

“ I hope, notwithstanding all that has been  
“ said, to write eight more plays this year, and  
“ to live long enough to rival Lope de Vega, or  
“ Calderon. I have two subjects that I think of  
“ writing on,—Miss Lee’s German tale ‘ Kruitz-  
“ ner,’ and Pausanias.

“ What do you think of Pausanias? The unities  
“ can be strictly preserved, almost without de-  
“ viating from history. The temple where he  
“ took refuge, and from whose sanctuary he was  
“ forced without profaning it, will furnish com-  
“ plete unities of time and place.

“ No event in ancient times ever struck me

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\* He seemed to think somewhat differently afterwards, when, after the review in ‘The Quarterly’ of his plays, he wrote to me, saying, “I am the most unpopular writer going!”

“ as more noble and dramatic than the death  
“ of Demosthenes. You remember his last words  
“ to Archias?—But subjects are not wanting.”

I told Lord Byron, that I had had a letter from Procter,\* and that he had been jeered on ‘The Duke of Mirandola’ not having been included in his (Lord B.’s) enumeration of the dramatic pieces of the day; and that he added, he had been at Harrow with him.

“ Ay,” said Lord Byron, “ I remember the  
“ name : he was in the lower school, in such a  
“ class. They stood Farrer, Procter, Jocelyn.”

I have no doubt Lord Byron could have gone through all the names, such was his memory. He immediately sat down, and very good-naturedly gave me the following note to send to Barry Cornwall, which shews that the arguments of the Reviewers had not changed his Unitarian opinions (as he called them) :

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\* Barry Cornwall.

“ Had I been aware of your tragedy when I  
“ wrote my note to ‘ Marino Faliero,’ al-  
“ though it is a matter of no consequence to you,  
“ I should certainly not have omitted to insert  
“ your name with those of the other writers who  
“ still do honour to the drama.

“ My own notions on the subject altogether  
“ are so different from the popular ideas of the  
“ day, that we differ essentially, as indeed I do  
“ from our whole English *literati*, upon that topic.  
“ But I do not contend that I am right—I merely  
“ say that such is my opinion; and as it is a so-  
“ litary one, it can do no great harm. But it  
“ does not prevent me from doing justice to the  
“ powers of those who adopt a different system.”

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I introduced the subject of Cain :—

“ When I was a boy,” said he, “ I studied  
“ German, which I have now entirely forgotten.  
“ It was very little I ever knew of it. Abel was  
“ one of the first books my German master read

“ to me; and whilst he was crying his eyes  
“ out over its pages, I thought that any other  
“ than Cain had hardly committed a crime in  
“ ridding the world of so dull a fellow as Gessner  
“ made brother Abel.

“ I always thought Cain a fine subject, and  
“ when I took it up I determined to treat it  
“ strictly after the Mosaic account. I therefore  
“ made the snake a snake, and took a Bishop for  
“ my interpreter.

“ I had once an idea of following the Arminian  
“ Scriptures, and making Cain's crime proceed from  
“ jealousy, and love of his uterine sister; but,  
“ though a more probable cause of dispute, I  
“ abandoned it as unorthodox.

“ One mistake crept in,—Abel's should have  
“ been made the first sacrifice : and it is singular  
“ that the first form of religious worship should  
“ have induced the first murder.

“ Hobhouse has denounced ‘ Cain’ as irreli-

“ gious, and has penned me a most furious epistle,  
“ urging me not to publish it, as I value my re-  
“ putation or his friendship. He contends that  
“ it is a work I should not have ventured to have  
“ put my name to in the days of Pope, Churchill,  
“ and Johnson (a curious trio !). Hobhouse used  
“ to write good verses once himself, but he seems  
“ to have forgotten what poetry is in others, when  
“ he says my ‘Cain’ reminds him of the worst  
“ bombast of Dryden’s. Shelley, who is no bad  
“ judge of the compositions of others, however  
“ he may fail in procuring success for his own,  
“ is most sensitive and indignant at this critique,  
“ and says (what is not the case) that ‘Cain’ is the  
“ finest thing I ever wrote, calls it worthy of  
“ Milton, and backs it against Hobhouse’s poe-  
“ tical Trinity.

“ The *Snake’s* rage has prevented my crest from  
“ rising. I shall write Hobhouse a very unim-  
“ passionate letter, but a firm one. The publi-  
“ cation shall go on, whether Murray refuses to  
“ print it or not.

“ I have just got a letter, and an admirable one  
“ it is, from Sir Walter Scott, to whom I dedi-  
“ cated ‘Cain.’ The sight of one of his letters  
“ always does me good. I hardly know what to  
“ make of all the contradictory opinions that  
“ have been sent me this week. Moore says,  
“ that more people are shocked with the blas-  
“ phemy of the sentiments, than delighted with  
“ the beauty of the lines. Another person thinks  
“ the Devil’s arguments irresistible, or irrefu-  
“ table. ——— says that the Liberals like it, but  
“ that the Ultraists are making a terrible outcry;  
“ and that the *he* and *him* not being in capitals,  
“ in full dress uniform, shocks the High-church  
“ and Court party. Some call me an Atheist,  
“ others a Manichæan,—a very bad and a hard-  
“ sounding name, that shocks the *illiterati* the  
“ more because they don’t know what it means.  
“ I am taxed with having made my drama a peg to  
“ hang on it a long, and some say tiresome, dis-  
“ sertation on the principle of Evil; and, what is  
“ worse, with having given Lucifer the best of  
“ the argument; all of which I am accused of  
“ taking from Voltaire.



“ I could not make Lucifer expound the Thirty-  
“ nine Articles, nor talk as the Divines do : that  
“ would never have suited his purpose,—nor,  
“ one would think, theirs. They ought to be  
“ grateful to him for giving them a subject to  
“ write about. What would they do without  
“ evil in the Prince of Evil? Othello’s occupation  
“ would be gone. I have made Lucifer say no  
“ more in his defence than was absolutely ne-  
“ cessary,—not half so much as Milton makes  
“ his Satan do. I was forced to keep up his  
“ dramatic character. *Au reste*, I have adhered  
“ closely to the Old Testament, and I defy any  
“ one to question my moral.

“ Johnson, who would have been glad of an  
“ opportunity of throwing another stone at Milton,  
“ redeems him from any censure for putting im-  
“ piety and even blasphemy into the mouths of  
“ his infernal spirits. By what rule, then, am  
“ I to have all the blame? What would the  
“ Methodists at home say to Goëthe’s ‘Faust?’  
“ His devil not only talks very familiarly *of*  
“ Heaven, but very familiarly *in* Heaven. What

“ would they think of the colloquies of Mephisto-  
“ pheles and his pupil, or the more daring lan-  
“ guage of the prologue, which no one will ever  
“ venture to translate? And yet this play is not  
“ only tolerated and admired, as every thing he  
“ wrote must be, but acted, in Germany. And  
“ are the Germans a less moral people than we  
“ are? I doubt it much. Faust itself is not so  
“ fine a subject as Cain. It is a grand mystery.  
“ The mark that was put upon Cain is a sublime  
“ and shadowy act: Goëthe would have made  
“ more of it than I have done.”\*

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\* On Mr. Murray being threatened with a prosecution, Lord Byron begged me to copy the following letter for him:—

“ Attacks upon me were to be expected, but I perceive  
“ one upon you in the papers which, I confess, I did not  
“ expect.

“ How and in what manner you can be considered re-  
“ sponsible for what I publish, I am at a loss to conceive.  
“ If ‘Cain’ be blasphemous, ‘Paradise Lost’ is blasphe-  
“ mous; and the words of the Oxford gentleman, ‘Evil, be  
“ thou my good,’ are from that very poem, from the mouth  
“ of Satan,—and is there any thing more in that of Lucifer,  
“ in the Mystery? ‘Cain’ is nothing more than a drama,

I cannot resist presenting the public with a drinking-song composed one morning, or perhaps evening, after one of our dinners.

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“ not a piece of argument. If Lucifer and Cain speak as  
“ the first rebel and the first murderer may be supposed  
“ to speak, nearly all the rest of the personages talk also  
“ according to their characters; and the stronger passions  
“ have ever been permitted to the drama. I have avoided  
“ introducing the Deity, as in Scripture, though Milton  
“ does, and not very wisely either; but have adopted his  
“ angel as sent to Cain instead, on purpose to avoid shock-  
“ ing any feelings on the subject, by falling short of what  
“ all uninspired men must fall short in,—viz. giving an  
“ adequate notion of the effect of the presence of Jehovah.  
“ The old Mysteries introduced Him liberally enough, and  
“ all this I avoided in the new one.

“ The attempt to bully you because they think it will not  
“ succeed with me, seems as atrocious an attempt as ever  
“ disgraced the times. What! when Gibbon’s, Hume’s,  
“ Priestley’s, and Drummond’s publishers have been allowed  
“ to rest in peace for seventy years, are you to be singled out  
“ for a work of fiction, not of history or argument?

“ There must be something at the bottom of this—some

- “ Fill the goblet again, for I never before  
“ Felt the glow that now gladdens my heart to its core :  
“ Let us drink—who would not ? since, thro’ life’s varied  
    “ round,  
“ In the goblet alone no deception is found.
- “ I have tried in its turn all that life can supply ;  
“ I have bask’d in the beams of a dark rolling eye ;  
“ I have lov’d—who has not ? but what tongue will declare  
“ That pleasure existed while passion was there ?
- 

“ private enemy of your own : it is otherwise incredible.  
“ I can only say, ‘ *Me, me, adsum qui feci;*’ that any pro-  
“ ceedings against you may, I beg, be transferred to me, who  
“ am willing and ought to endure them all ; that if you have  
“ lost money by the publication, I will refund any or all of  
“ the copyright : that I desire you will say, that both you  
“ and Mr. Gifford remonstrated against the publication, and  
“ also Mr. Hobhouse ; that I alone occasioned it, and I alone  
“ am the person who, either legally or otherwise, should bear  
“ the burthen.

“ If they prosecute, I will come to England ; that is, if by  
“ meeting in my own person I can save yours. Let me know.  
“ You shan’t suffer for me, if I can help it. Make any use of  
“ this letter you please.”

“ In the days of our youth, when the heart’s in its spring,  
“ And dreams that affection can never take wing,  
“ I had friends,—who has not? but what tongue will avow  
“ That friends, rosy wine, are so faithful as thou?

“ The breast of a mistress some boy may estrange ;  
“ Friendship shifts with the sun-beam,—thou never canst  
“ change.  
“ Thou grow’st old—who does not? but on earth what  
“ appears,  
“ Whose virtues, like thine, but increase with our years?

“ Yet if blest to the utmost that love can bestow,  
“ Should a rival bow down to our idol below,  
“ We are jealous—who’s not? *thou* hast no such alloy,  
“ For the more that enjoy thee, the more they enjoy.

“ When, the season of youth and its jollities past,  
“ For refuge we fly to the goblet at last,  
“ Then we find—who does not? in the flow of the soul,  
“ That truth, as of yore, is confin’d to the bowl.

“ When the box of Pandora was opened on earth,  
“ And Memory’s triumph commenced over Mirth,  
“ Hope was left—was she not? but the goblet *we* kiss,  
“ And care not for hope, who are certain of bliss.

- “ Long life to the grape ! and when summer is flown,  
“ The age of our nectar shall gladden my own.  
“ We must die—who does not ? may our sins be forgiven !  
“ And Hebe shall never be idle in Heaven.”
- 

Dining with him another day, the subject of private theatricals was introduced.

“ I am very fond of a private theatre,” said he. “ I remember myself and some friends at Cambridge getting up a play ; and that reminds me of a thing which happened, that was very provoking in itself, but very humorous in its consequences.

“ On the day of representation, one of the performers took it into his head to make an excuse, and his part was obliged to be read. Hobhouse came forward to apologize to the audience, and told them that a Mr. —— had declined to perform his part, etc. The gentleman was highly indignant at the ‘ a,’ and had a great in-

“clination to pick a quarrel with Scroope Davies,  
“who replied, that he supposed Mr. —— wanted  
“to be called *the* Mr. so and so. He ever after  
“went by the name of the ‘*Definite Article*.’

“After this preface, to be less indefinite, sup-  
“pose we were to get up a play. My hall, which  
“is the largest in Tuscany, would make a capital  
“theatre; and we may send to Florence for an  
“audience, if we cannot fill it here. And as to  
“decorations, nothing is easier in any part of  
“Italy than to get them : besides that, Williams  
“will assist us.”

It was accordingly agreed that we should commence with “Othello.” Lord Byron was to be Iago. Orders were to be given for the fitting up of the stage, preparing the dresses, etc., and rehearsals of a few scenes took place. Perhaps Lord Byron would have made the finest actor in the world. His voice had a flexibility, a variety in its tones, a power and pathos beyond any I ever heard; and his countenance was capable of expressing the tenderest, as well as the strongest emotions. I

shall never forget his reading Iago's part in the handkerchief scene.

“Shakspeare was right,” said he, after he had finished, “in making Othello's jealousy turn upon that circumstance.\* The handkerchief is the strongest proof of love, not only among the Moors, but all Eastern nations: and yet they say that the plot of ‘Marino Faliero’ hangs upon too slight a cause.”

All at once a difficulty arose about a Desdemona, and the Guiccioli put her Veto on our theatricals.

The influence of the Countess over Lord Byron reminded me of a remark of Fletcher's that Shelley once repeated to me as having overheard:—

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\* Calderon says, in the *Cisma de l'Inglaterra*, (I have not the original,)

“She gave me, too, a handkerchief,—a spell—

“A flattering pledge, my hopes to animate—

“An astrologic favour—fatal prize

“That told too true what tears must weep these eyes!”



“ That it was strange every woman should be able to manage his Lordship, but her Ladyship !”

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Discussing the different actors of the day, he said :

“ Dowton, who hated Kean, used to say that his Othello reminded him of Obi, or Three-fingered Jack, — not Othello. But, whatever his Othello might have been, Garrick himself never surpassed him in Iago. I am told that Kean is not so great a favorite with the public since his return from America, and that party strengthened against him in his absence. I *guess* he could not have staid long enough to be spoiled ; though I *calculate* no actor is improved by their stage. How do you *reckon* ?

“ Kean began by acting Richard the Third when quite a boy, and gave all the promise of what he afterwards became. His Sir Giles Overreach was a wonderful performance. The actresses were afraid of him ; and he was afterwards

*\* The words in italics are Sir Giles's own.*

“so much exhausted himself, that he fell into  
“fits. This, I am told, was the case with Miss  
“O’Neil.\*

“Kemble did much towards the reform of our  
“stage. Classical costume was almost unknown  
“before he undertook to revise the dresses. Gar-  
“rick used to act Othello in a red coat and epau-  
“lettes, and other characters had prescriptive ha-  
“bits equally ridiculous. I can conceive nothing  
“equal to Kemble’s Coriolanus; and he looked  
“the Roman so well, that even Cato, ‘cold and  
“*stiltish* as it is, had a run. That shews what  
“an actor can do for a play! If he had acte  
“‘Marino Faliero,’ its fate would have been very  
“different.

“Kemble pronounced several words affectedly,  
“which should be cautiously avoided on the stage.  
“It is nothing that Campbell writes it *Sepulcrè* in  
“‘Hohenlinden.’ The Greek derivation is much  
“against his pronunciation of *ache*.”

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\* And he might have added Pasta.

He now began to mimic Kemble's voice and manner of spouting, and imitated him inimitably in Prospero's lines :

“ ‘Yea, the great globe itself, it shall dissolve,

“ ‘And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,

“ ‘Leave not a *rack* behind !’

“ When half-seas over, Kemble used to speak  
“ in blank-verse : and with practice, I don't think  
“ it would be difficult. Good prose resolves itself  
“ into blank-verse. Why should we not be able  
“ to improvise in hexameters, as well as the  
“ Italians? Theodore Hook is an improvisatore.”

“ The greatest genius in that way that perhaps Italy ever produced,” said Shelley, “ is Sgricci.”

“ There is a great deal of knack in these gentlemen,” replied Lord Byron; “ their poetry is  
“ more mechanical than you suppose. More verses  
“ are written yearly in Italy, than millions of  
“ money are circulated. It is usual for every  
“ Italian gentleman to make sonnets to his mistress's eyebrow before he is married,—or the  
“ lady must be very uninspiring indeed.

“ But Sgricci! To extemporize a whole tragedy seems a miraculous gift. I heard him improvise a five-act play at Lucca,” said Shelley, “ on the subject of the ‘ *Iphigenia in Tauris*,’ and never was more interested. He put one of the finest speeches into the mouth of Iphigenia I ever heard. She compared her brother Orestes to the sole remaining pillar on which a temple hung tottering, in the act of ruin. The idea, it is true, is from Euripides, but he made it his own.”

“ I have never read his play since I was at school” replied Lord Byron. “ I don’t know how Sgricci’s tragedies may appear in print, but his printed poetry is tame stuff. The inspiration of the *improviser* is quite a separate talent:— a consciousness of his own powers, his own elocution—the wondering and applauding audience,—all conspire to give him confidence; but the deity forsakes him when he coldly sits down to think. Sgricci is not only a fine poet, but a fine actor. Mrs. Siddons,” continued Lord Byron, “ was the *beau idéal* of acting; Miss O’Neill I would not go to see, for

“ fear of weakening the impression made by the  
“ queen of tragedians. When I read Lady Mac-  
“ beth’s part, I have Mrs. Siddons be fore me,  
“ and imagination even supplies her voice, whose  
“ tones were superhuman, and power over the  
“ heart supernatural.

“ It is pleasant enough sometimes to take a  
“ peep behind, as well as to look before the scenes.

“ I remember one leg of an elephant saying  
“ to another, ‘D—n your eyes, move a little  
“ quicker;’ and overhearing at the Opera two  
“ people in love, who were so *distracts* that they  
“ made the responses between the intervals of  
“ the recitative, instead of during the recitation  
“ itself. One said to the other, ‘Do you love  
“ me?’ then came the flourish of music, and  
“ the reply sweeter than the music, ‘Can you  
“ doubt it?’ ”

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“ I have just been reading Lamb’s Specimens,”  
said he, “ and am surprised to find in the extracts

“ from the old dramatists so many ideas that I  
“ thought exclusively my own. Here is a pas-  
“ sage, for instance, from ‘The Duchess of Malfy,’  
“ astonishingly like one in ‘Don Juan.’

“ ‘*The leprosy of lust*’ I discover, too, is not  
“ mine. ‘*Thou tremblest,*’ — ‘*’Tis with age*  
“ *then,*’ which I am accused of borrowing from  
“ Otway, was taken from the Old Bailey proceed-  
“ ings. Some judge observed to the witness,  
“ ‘*Thou tremblest;*’ — ‘*’Tis with cold then,*’ was  
“ the reply.

“ These Specimens of Lamb’s I never saw till  
“ to-day. I am taxed with being a plagiarist,  
“ when I am least conscious of being one; but I  
“ am not very scrupulous, I own, when I have a  
“ good idea, how I came into possession of it.  
“ How can we tell to what extent Shakspeare is  
“ indebted to his contemporaries, whose works  
“ are now lost? Besides which, Cibber adapted  
“ his plays to the stage.

“ The invocation of the witches was, we know,

“ a servile plagiarism from Middleton. Authors  
“ were not so squeamish about borrowing from  
“ one another in those days. If it be a fault, I do  
“ not pretend to be immaculate. I will lend you  
“ some volumes of Shipwrecks, from which my  
“ storm in ‘Don Juan’ came.”

“ Lend me also ‘Casti’s Novelle,’ ” said I. “ Did  
you never see in Italian,—

“ Round her she makes an atmosphere of light ;  
“ The very air seemed lighter from her eyes ? ”

“ The Germans,” said he, “ and I believe  
“ Goëthe himself, consider that I have taken  
“ great liberties with ‘Faust.’ All I know of that  
“ drama is from a sorry French translation, from  
“ an occasional reading or two into English of  
“ parts of it by Monk Lewis when at Diodati, and  
“ from the Hartz mountain-scene, that Shelley  
“ versified from the other day. Nothing I envy  
“ him so much as to be able to read that astonish-  
“ ing production in the original. As to origina-  
“ lity, Goëthe has too much sense to pretend that

“ he is not under obligations to authors, ancient  
“ and modern ;—who is not ? You tell me the  
“ plot is almost entirely Calderon’s. The fête,  
“ the scholar, the argument about the *Logos*, the  
“ selling himself to the fiend, and afterwards  
“ denying his power ; his disguise of the plumed  
“ cavalier ; the enchanted mirror,—are all from  
“ Cyprian. That *magico prodigioso* must be worth  
“ reading, and nobody seems to know any thing  
“ about it but you and Shelley. Then the vision  
“ is not unlike that of Marlow’s, in his ‘ Faustus.’  
“ The bed-scene is from ‘ Cymbeline ;’ the song  
“ or serenade, a translation of Ophelia’s, in ‘ Ham-  
“ let ;’ and, more than all, the prologue is from  
“ Job, which is the first drama in the world, and  
“ perhaps the oldest poem. I had an idea of  
“ writing a ‘ Job,’ but I found it too sublime.  
“ There is no poetry to be compared with it.”

I told him that Japhet’s soliloquy in ‘ Heaven and Earth,’ and address to the mountains of Caucasus, strongly resembled Faust’s.

“ I shall have commentators enough by and



“ by,” said he, “ to dissect my thoughts, and  
“ find owners for them.”

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“ When I first saw the review of my ‘Hours of  
“ Idleness,’\* I was furious; in such a rage as I  
“ never have been in since.

“ I dined that day with Scroope Davies, and  
“ drank three bottles of claret to drown it; but it  
“ only boiled the more. That critique was a  
“ masterpiece of low wit, a tissue of scurrilous  
“ abuse. I remember there was a great deal of  
“ vulgar trash in it which was meant for humour,  
“ ‘about people being thankful for what they  
“ could get,’—‘not looking a gift horse in the  
“ mouth,’ and such stable expressions. The se-  
“ verity of ‘The Quarterly’ killed poor Keats, and  
“ neglect, Kirke White; but I was made of dif-  
“ ferent stuff, of tougher materials. So far from  
“ their bullying me, or deterring me from writ-

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\* Written in 1808.

“ ing, I was bent on falsifying their raven predic-  
“ tions, and determined to shew them, croak as  
“ they would, that it was not the last time they  
“ should hear from me. I set to work immedi-  
“ ately, and in good earnest, and produced in a  
“ year ‘The English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.’  
“ For the first four days after it was announced,  
“ I was very nervous about its fate. Generally  
“ speaking, the first fortnight decides the public  
“ opinion of a new book. This made a prodigious  
“ impression, more perhaps than any of my  
“ works, except ‘The Corsair.’

“ In less than a year and a half it passed through  
“ four editions, and rather large ones. To some  
“ of them, contrary to the advice of my friends, I  
“ affixed my name. The thing was known to be  
“ mine, and I could not have escaped any enemies  
“ in not owning it; besides, it was more manly  
“ not to deny it. There were many things in that  
“ satire which I was afterwards sorry for, and I  
“ wished to cancel it. If Galignani chose to re-  
“ print it, it was no fault of mine. I did my  
“ utmost to suppress the publication, not only in

“ England, but in Ireland. I will tell you my  
“ principal reason for doing so: I had good  
“ grounds to believe that Jeffrey (though perhaps  
“ really responsible for whatever appears in ‘The  
“ Edinburgh,’ as Gifford is for ‘The Quarterly,’  
“ as its editor) was not the author of that article,  
“ —was not guilty of it. He disowned it; and  
“ though he would not give up the aggressor, he  
“ said he would convince me, if I ever came to  
“ Scotland, who the person was. I have every  
“ reason to believe it was a certain lawyer, who  
“ hated me for something I once said of Mrs.——.  
“ The technical language about ‘minority pleas,’  
“ ‘plaintiffs,’ ‘grounds of action,’ etc. a jargon  
“ only intelligible to a lawyer, leaves no doubt in  
“ my mind on the subject. I bear no animosity to  
“ him now, though, independently of this lam-  
“ poon, which does him no credit, he gave me  
“ cause enough of offence.

“ The occasion was this :—In my separation-  
“ cause, that went before the Chancellor as a  
“ matter of form, when the proceedings came on,  
“ he took upon himself to apply some expressions,

“ or make some allusions to me, which must have  
“ been of a most unwarrantable nature, as my  
“ friends consulted whether they should acquaint  
“ me with the purport of them. What they pre-  
“ cisely were I never knew, or should certainly  
“ have made him retract them. I met him after-  
“ wards at Coppet, but was not at that time ac-  
“ quainted with this circumstance. He took on  
“ himself the advocate also, in writing to Madame  
“ de Staël, and advising her not to meddle in the  
“ quarrel between Lady Byron and myself. This  
“ was not kind ; it was a gratuitous and unfeed  
“ act of hostility. But there was another reason  
“ that influenced me even more than my cooled  
“ resentment against Jeffrey, to suppress ‘ English  
“ Bards and Scotch Reviewers.’ In the duel-scene  
“ I had unconsciously made part of the ridicule  
“ fall on Moore. The fact was, that there was no  
“ imputation on the courage of either of the prin-  
“ cipals. One of the balls fell out in the carriage,  
“ and was lost ; and the seconds, not having a  
“ further supply, drew the remaining one.

“ Shortly after this publication I went abroad :

“ and Moore was so offended by the mention of  
“ the leadless pistols, that he addressed a letter  
“ to me in the nature of a challenge, delivering  
“ it to the care of Mr. Hanson, but without ac-  
“ quainting him with the contents. This letter  
“ was mislaid,—at least never forwarded to me.

“ But, on my return to England in 1812, an  
“ inquiry was made by Moore, if I had received  
“ such a letter? adding, that particular circum-  
“ stances (meaning his marriage, or perhaps the  
“ suppression of the satire) had now altered his  
“ situation, and that he wished to recall the letter,  
“ and to be known to me through Rogers. I was  
“ shy of this mode of arranging matters, one hand  
“ presenting a pistol, and another held out to  
“ shake; and felt awkward at the loss of a letter  
“ of such a nature, and the imputation it might  
“ have given rise to. But when, after a consi-  
“ derable search, it was at length found, I re-  
“ turned it to Moore with the seal unbroken; and  
“ we have since been the best friends in the world.  
“ I correspond with no one so regularly as with  
“ Moore.

“ It is remarkable that I should at this moment  
“ number among my most intimate friends and  
“ correspondents those whom I most made the  
“ subjects of satire in ‘ English Bards.’ I never  
“ retracted my opinions of their works,—I never  
“ sought their acquaintance ; but there are men  
“ who can forgive and forget. The Laureate is  
“ not one of that disposition, and exults over  
“ the anticipated death-bed repentance of the  
“ objects of his hatred. Finding that his denun-  
“ ciations or panegyrics are of little or no avail  
“ here, he indulges himself in a pleasant *vision*  
“ as to what will be their fate hereafter. The  
“ third Heaven is hardly good enough for a king,  
“ and Dante’s worst berth in the ‘ Inferno’ hardly  
“ bad enough for me. My kindness to his brother-  
“ in-law might have taught him to be more cha-  
“ ritable. I said in a Note to ‘ The Two Foscari,’  
“ in answer to his vain boasting, that I had done  
“ more real good in one year than Mr. Southey in  
“ the whole course of his shifting and turn-coat  
“ existence, on which he seems to reflect with  
“ so much complacency. I did not mean to pride  
“ myself on the act to which I have just referred,

“ and should not mention it to you, but that his  
“ self-sufficiency calls for the explanation. When  
“ Coleridge was in great distress, I borrowed 100*l*.  
“ to give him.”

Some days after this discussion appeared Mr. Southey's reply to the Note in question. I happened to see 'The Literary Gazette' at Mr. Edgeworth's, and mentioned the general purport of the letter to Lord Byron during our evening ride. His anxiety to get a sight of it was so great, that he wrote me two notes in the course of the evening, entreating me to procure the paper. I at length succeeded, and took it to the Lanfranchi palace at eleven o'clock, (after coming from the Opera,) an hour at which I was frequently in the habit of calling on him.

He had left the Guiccioli earlier than usual, and I found him waiting with some impatience. I never shall forget his countenance as he glanced rapidly over the contents. He looked perfectly awful : his colour changed almost prismatically; his lips were as pale as death. He said not a word. He

read it a second time, and with more attention than his rage at first permitted, commenting on some of the passages as he went on. When he had finished, he threw down the paper, and asked me if I thought there was any thing of a personal nature in the reply that demanded satisfaction ; as, if there was, he would instantly set off for England and call Southey to an account,—muttering something about whips, and branding-irons, and gibbets; and wounding the heart of a woman, — words of Mr. Southey's. I said that, as to personality, his own expressions of “ cowardly ferocity,” “ pitiful renegado,” “ hireling,” were much stronger than any in the letter before me. He paused a moment, and said :

“ Perhaps you are right ; but I will consider of  
“ it. You have not seen *my* ‘ Vision of Judg-  
“ ment.’ I wish I had a copy to shew you ; but  
“ the only one I have is in London. I had almost  
“ decided not to publish it, but it shall now go  
“ forth to the world. I will write to Douglas  
“ Kinnaird by to-morrow's post, not to delay  
“ its appearance. The question is, whom to



“ get to print it. Murray will have nothing to  
“ say to it just now, while the prosecution of  
“ ‘Cain’ hangs over his head. It was offered  
“ to Longman; but he declined it on the plea of  
“ its injuring the sale of Southey’s Hexameters,  
“ of which he is the publisher. Hunt shall  
“ have it.”

Another time he said :

“ I am glad Mr. Southey owns that article on  
“ ‘Foliage,’ which excited my choler so much.  
“ But who else could have been the author?  
“ Who but Southey would have had the base-  
“ ness, under the pretext of reviewing the  
“ work of one man, insidiously to make it a nest  
“ egg for hatching malicious calumnies against  
“ others?

“ It was bad taste, to say the least of it, in  
“ Shelley to write *Αθεις* after his name at Mont  
“ Anvert. I knew little of him at that time, but  
“ it happened to meet my eye, and I put my pen  
“ through the word, and *Μωρος* too, that had

“ been added by some one else by way of com-  
“ ment—and a very proper comment too, and the  
“ only one that should have been made on it.  
“ There it should have stopped. It would have  
“ been more creditable to Mr. Southey’s heart  
“ and feelings if he had been of this opinion;  
“ he would then never have made the use of his  
“ travels he did, nor have raked out of an album  
“ the silly joke of a boy, in order to make it  
“ matter of serious accusation against him at  
“ home. I might well say he had impudence  
“ enough, if he could confess such infamy. I say  
“ nothing of the critique itself on ‘ Foliage ;’  
“ with the exception of a few sonnets, it was un-  
“ worthy of Hunt. But what was the object of  
“ that article? I repeat, to vilify and scatter his  
“ dark and devilish insinuations against me and  
“ others. Shame on the man who could wound  
“ an already bleeding heart,—be barbarous enough  
“ to revive the memory of a fatal event that Shel-  
“ ley was perfectly innocent of—and found scandal  
“ on falsehood ! Shelley taxed him with writing  
“ that article some years ago; and he had the  
“ audacity to admit that he had treasured up

“ some opinions of Shelley’s, ten years before,  
“ when he was on a visit at Keswick, and had made  
“ a note of them at the time. But his bag of venom  
“ was not full; it is the nature of the reptile.  
“ Why does a viper have a poison-tooth, or the  
“ scorpion claws?”

Some days after these remarks, on calling on him one morning, he produced ‘The Deformed Transformed.’ Handing it to Shelley, as he was in the habit of doing his daily compositions, he said,

“ Shelley, I have been writing a *Faustish* kind  
“ of drama : tell me what you think of it.”

After reading it attentively, Shelley returned it.

“ Well,” said Lord Byron, “ how do you like  
“ it?”

“ Least,” replied he, “ of any thing I ever saw  
of yours. It is a bad imitation of ‘Faust;’ and besides, there are two entire lines of Southey’s in it.”

Lord Byron changed colour immediately, and asked hastily what lines? Shelley repeated,

“ ‘And water shall see thee,

“ ‘And fear thee, and flee thee.’ ”

“ They are in ‘The Curse of Kehama.’ ”

His Lordship, without making a single observation, instantly threw the poem into the fire. He seemed to feel no chagrin at seeing it consume—at least his countenance betrayed none, and his conversation became more gay and lively than usual. Whether it was hatred of Southey, or respect for Shelley’s opinion, which made him commit an act that I considered a sort of suicide, was always doubtful to me. I was never more surprised than to see, two years afterwards, ‘The Deformed Transformed’ announced; (supposing it to have perished at Pisa;) but it seems that he must have had another copy of the manuscript, or had re-written it perhaps, without changing a word, except omitting the ‘Kehama’ lines. His memory was remarkably retentive of his own

writings. I believe he could have quoted almost every line he ever wrote.

One day a correspondent of Lord Byron's sent him from Paris the following lines—a sort of epitaph for Southey—which he gave me leave to copy.

“ Beneath these poppies buried deep,  
The bones of Bob the Bard lie hid ;  
Peace to his manes ! and may he sleep  
As soundly as his readers did !

Through every sort of verse meandering,  
Bob went without a hitch or fall,  
Through Epic, Sapphic, Alexandrine,  
To verse that was no verse at all ;

Till Fiction having done enough,  
To make a bard at least absurd,  
And give his readers *quantum suff*,  
He took to praising George the Third :

And now in virtue of his crown,  
Dooms us, poor Whigs, at once to slaughter ;  
Like Donellan of bad renown,  
Poisoning us all with laurel water.

And yet at times some awkward qualms he  
Felt about leaving honour's track ;  
And though he has got a butt of Malmsey,  
It may not save him from a sack.

Death, weary of so dull a writer,  
Put to his works a *finis* thus.  
O! may the earth on him lie lighter  
Than did his quartos upon us !”

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“ ‘ Heaven and Earth ’ was commenced,” said  
“ he, “ at Ravenna, on the 9th October last. It  
“ occupied about fourteen days. Douglas Kin-  
“ naird tells me that he can get no bookseller  
“ to publish it. It was offered to Murray, but  
“ he is the most timid of God’s booksellers, and  
“ starts at the title. He has taken a dislike to  
“ that three-syllabled word *Mystery*, and says,  
“ I know not why, that it is another ‘ Cain.’ I  
“ suppose he does not like my making one of  
“ Cain’s daughters talk the same language as her  
“ father’s father, and has a prejudice against the  
“ family. I could not make her so unnatural as  
“ to speak ill of her grandfather. I was forced

“ to make her aristocratical, proud of her descent  
“ from the eldest born. Murray says, that who-  
“ ever prints it will have it pirated, as ‘Cain’ has  
“ been,—that a Court of justice will not sanction  
“ it as literary property. On what plea? There  
“ is nothing objectionable in it, that I am aware  
“ of. You have read it; what do you think? If  
“ ‘Cain’ be immoral (which I deny), will not the  
“ Chancellor’s refusal to protect, and the cheap-  
“ ness of a piratical edition, give it a wider  
“ circulation among the lower classes? Will they  
“ not buy and read it for the very reason that  
“ it is considered improper, and try to discover  
“ an evil tendency where it was least meant?  
“ May not impiety be extracted by garbling the  
“ Bible? I defy the common people to under-  
“ stand such mysteries as the loves of the Angels,  
“ at least they are mysteries to me. Moore, too,  
“ is writing on the same text. Any thing that  
“ he writes must succeed.”

I told him that the laughter of the fiends in the Cave of Caucasus reminded me of the row of the Furies in the ‘Eumenides’ of Æschylus.

“ I have never read any of his plays since I left  
“ Harrow,” said Lord Byron. “ Shelley, when I  
“ was in Switzerland, translated the ‘Prometheus’  
“ to me before I wrote my ode ; but I never  
“ open a Greek book. Shelley tells me that the  
“ choruses in ‘Heaven and Earth’ are deficient.  
“ He thinks that lyrical poetry should be me-  
“ trically regular. Surely this is not the case  
“ with the Greek choruses that he makes such  
“ a fuss about. However, Hunt will be glad of  
“ it for his new periodical work. I talked of writ-  
“ ing a second part to it; but it was only as  
“ Coleridge promised a second part to ‘Christa-  
“ bel.’ I will tell you how I had an idea of finishing it:

“ Let me see—where did I leave off? Oh, with  
“ Azazel and Samiasa refusing to obey the sum-  
“ mons of Michael, and throwing off their alle-  
“ giance to Heaven. They rise into the air with  
“ the two sisters, and leave this globe to a fate  
“ which, according to Cuvier, it has often un-  
“ dergone, and will undergo again. The appear-  
“ ance of the land strangled by the ocean will  
“ serve by way of scenery and decorations. The



“ affectionate tenderness of Adah for those from  
“ whom she is parted, and for ever, and her fears  
“ contrasting with the loftier spirit of Aholiba-  
“ mah triumphing in the hopes of a new and  
“ greater destiny, will make the dialogue. They  
“ in the mean time continue their aërial voyage,  
“ every where denied admittance in those float-  
“ ing islands on the sea of space, and driven  
“ back by guardian-spirits of the different pla-  
“ nets, till they are at length forced to alight  
“ on the only peak of the earth uncovered by  
“ water. Here a parting takes place between  
“ the lovers, which I shall make affecting enough.  
“ The fallen Angels are suddenly called, and  
“ condemned,—their destination and punish-  
“ ment unknown. The sisters still cling to the  
“ rock, the waters mounting higher and higher.  
“ Now enter Ark. The scene draws up, and  
“ discovers Japhet endeavouring to persuade the  
“ Patriarch, with very strong arguments of love  
“ and pity, to receive the sisters, or at least  
“ Adah, on board. Adah joins in his entreaties,  
“ and endeavours to cling to the sides of the

“ vessel. The proud and haughty Aholibamah  
“ scorns to pray either to God or man, and an-  
“ ticipates the grave by plunging into the waters.  
“ Noah is still inexorable. The surviving daughter  
“ of Cain is momentarily in danger of perish-  
“ ing before the eyes of the Arkites. Japhet is  
“ in despair. The last wave sweeps her from  
“ the rock, and her lifeless corpse floats past in  
“ all its beauty, whilst a sea-bird screams over  
“ it, and seems to be the spirit of her angel  
“ lord. I once thought of conveying the lovers  
“ to the moon, or one of the planets ; but it  
“ is not easy for the imagination to make any  
“ unknown world more beautiful than this ;  
“ besides, I did not think they would approve  
“ of the moon as a residence. I remembered what  
“ Fontenelle said of its having no atmosphere,  
“ and the dark spots being caverns where the in-  
“ habitants reside. There was another objec-  
“ tion : all the human interest would have been  
“ destroyed, which I have even endeavoured to  
“ give my Angels. It was a very Irish kind of  
“ compliment Jeffrey paid to Moore’s ‘Lalla

“ Rookh,” when he said the loves were those of  
“ Angels ; meaning that they were like nothing  
“ on earth. What will he say of ‘ The Loves  
“ of the Angels ? ’ — that they are like ( for he has  
“ nothing left ) nothing in Heaven ?

“ I wrote ‘ The Prophecy of Dante ’ at the sug-  
“ gestion of the Countess. I was at that time  
“ paying my court to the Guiccioli, and address-  
“ ed the dedicatory sonnet to her. She had heard  
“ of my having written something about Tasso,  
“ and thought Dante’s exile and death would fur-  
“ nish as fine a subject. I can never write but on  
“ the spot. Before I began ‘ The Lament,’ I went  
“ to Ferrara, to visit the Dungeon. Hoppner was  
“ with me, and part of it, the greater part, was  
“ composed ( as ‘ The Prisoner of Chillon ’ ) in the  
“ prison. The place of Dante’s fifteen years’  
“ exile, where he so pathetically prayed for his  
“ country, and deprecated the thought of being  
“ buried out of it ; and the sight of his tomb,  
“ which I passed in my almost daily rides,—in-  
“ spired me. Besides, there was somewhat of

“resemblance\* in our destinies—he had a wife,  
 “and I have the same feelings about leaving my  
 “bones in a strange land.

“I had, however, a much more extensive view  
 “in writing that poem than to describe either his  
 “banishment or his grave. Poets are sometimes  
 “shrewd in their conjectures. You quoted to me  
 “the other day a line in ‘Childe Harold,’ in which  
 “I made a prediction about the Greeks:† in this  
 “instance I was not so fortunate as to be prophe-  
 “tic. This poem was intended for the Italians and

\* “The day may come she would be proud to have  
 “The dust she doom’d to strangers, and transfer  
 “Of him whom she denied a home—the grave.”

*Prophecy of Dante.*

“Where now my boys are, and that fatal she”—

*Ibid.*

“They made an exile, not a slave of me.”

*Ibid.*

† “Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? No.”

*Childe Harold, Canto II. Stanza 75.*

“ the Guiccioli, and therefore I wished to have it  
“ translated. I had objected to the *Versi sciolti*  
“ having been used in my Fourth Canto of ‘Childe  
“ Harold ;’ but this was the very metre they adopt-  
“ ed in defiance of my remonstrance, and in the  
“ very teeth of it; and yet I believe the Italians  
“ liked the work. It was looked at in a political  
“ light, and they indulged in my dream of liberty,  
“ and the resurrection of Italy. Alas ! it was  
“ only a dream !

“ *Terza Rima* does not seem to suit the genius  
“ of English poetry—it is certainly uncalculated  
“ for a work of any length. In our language,  
“ however, it may do for a short ode. The pub-  
“ lic at least thought my attempt a failure, and  
“ the public is in the main right. I never perse-  
“ cute the public. I always bow to its verdict,  
“ which is generally just. But if I had wanted  
“ a sufficient reason for my giving up the Pro-  
“ phesy—the Prophecy failed me.

“ It was the turn political affairs took that made  
“ me relinquish the work. At one time the flame

“ was expected to break out over all Italy, but it  
“ only ended in smoke, and my poem went out  
“ with it. I don’t wonder at the enthusiasm of  
“ the Italians about Dante. He is the poet of  
“ liberty. Persecution, exile, the dread of a  
“ foreign grave, could not shake his principles.  
“ There is no Italian gentleman, scarcely any  
“ well-educated girl, that has not all the finer pas-  
“ sages of Dante at the fingers’ ends,—parti-  
“ cularly the Ravennese. The Guiccioli, for in-  
“ stance, could almost repeat any part of the  
“ ‘Divine Comedy;’ and, I dare say, is well read  
“ in the ‘*Vita Nuova*,’ that prayer-book of  
“ love.

“ Shelley always says that reading Dante is un-  
“ favourable to writing, from its superiority to  
“ all possible compositions. Whether he be the  
“ first or not, he is certainly the most untran-  
“ slatable of all poets. You may give the mean-  
“ ing; but the charm, the simplicity—the classical  
“ simplicity—is lost. You might as well clothe  
“ a statue as attempt to translate Dante. He is  
“ better, as an Italian said, ‘*nudo che vestito*.’

“ There’s Taafe is not satisfied with what Carey  
 “ has done, but he must be *traducing* him too.  
 “ What think you of that fine line in the ‘Inferno’  
 “ being rendered, as Taafe has done it?

“ ‘ I Mantuan, capering, squalid, squalling.’

“ There’s alliteration and inversion enough,  
 “ surely ! I have advised him to frontispiece his  
 “ book with his own head, ‘ *Capo di Traditore*,  
 “ ‘ the head of a *traitor* ;’ then will come the title-  
 “ page comment—Hell !”

I asked Lord Byron the meaning of a passage in  
 ‘ The Prophecy of Dante.’ He laughed, and said :

“ I suppose I had some meaning when I wrote  
 “ it : I believe I understood it then.” \*

\* “ If *you* insist on grammar, though

“ I never think about it in a heat —”

*Don Juan*, Canto VII. Stanza 42.

“ I don’t pretend that I quite understand

“ My own meaning when I would be very fine.”

*Don Juan*, Cantò IV. Stanza 5.

“That,” said I, “is what the disciples of Swedenberg say. There are many people who do not understand passages in your writings, among our own countrymen : I wonder how foreigners contrive to translate them.”

“And yet,” said he, “they have been translated into all the civilized, and many uncivilized tongues. Several of them have appeared in Danish, Polish, and even Russian dresses. These last, being translations of translations from the French, must be very diluted. The greatest compliment ever paid me has been shewn in Germany, where a translation of the Fourth Canto of ‘Childe Harold’ has been made the subject of a University prize. But as to obscurity, is not Milton obscure? How do you explain

———“ ‘Smoothing

“ ‘The raven down of darkness till it smiled!’

“Is it not a simile taken from the electricity of a cat’s back? I’ll leave you to be my commentator, and hope you will make better work with



“ me than Taafe is doing with Dante, who perhaps could not himself explain half that volumes are written about, if his ghost were to rise again from the dead. I am sure I wonder he and Shakspeare have not been raised by their commentators long ago !”

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“ People are always advising me,” said he, “to write an epic. You tell me that I shall leave no great poem behind me ;—that is, I suppose you mean by great, a heavy poem, or a weighty poem ; I believe they are synonymous. You say that ‘ Childe Harold’ is unequal ; that the last two Cantos are far superior to the first two. I know it is a thing without form or substance,—a *voyage pittoresque*. But who reads Milton ? My opinion as to the inequality of my poems is this,—that one is not better or worse than another. And as to epics,—have you not got enough of Southey’s ? There’s ‘ Joan d’Arc,’ ‘ The Curse of Kehama,’ and God knows how many more curses, down to ‘ The Last of the Goths !’ If you must have an epic, there’s ‘ Don Juan’ for you.

“ I call that an epic :\* it is an epic as much in the  
“ spirit of our day as the Iliad was in Homer’s.  
“ Love, religion, and politics form the argument,  
“ and are as much the cause of quarrels now as  
“ they were then. There is no want of Parisés  
“ and Menelauses, and of *Crim.-cons.* into the  
“ bargain. In the very first Canto you have a  
“ Helen. Then, I shall make my hero a perfect  
“ Achilles for fighting,—a man who can snuff a  
“ candle three successive times with a pistol-ball :  
“ and, depend upon it, my moral will be a good  
“ one ; not even Dr. Johnson should be able to  
“ find a flaw in it !

“ Some one has possessed the Guiccioli with a  
“ notion that my ‘ Don Juan’ and the Don Gio-  
“ vanni of the Opera are the same person ; and to  
“ please her I have discontinued his history and  
“ adventures ; but if I should resume them, I will  
“ tell you how I mean him to go on. I left him in

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\* Only five Cantos of ‘ Don Juan’ were written when I held this conversation with him, which was committed to paper half an hour after it occurred.

“ the seraglio there. I shall make one of the  
“ favourites, a Sultana, (no less a personage,) fall  
“ in love with him, and carry him off from Con-  
“ stantinople. Such elopements are not uncom-  
“ mon, nor unnatural either, though it would  
“ shock the ladies to say they are ever to blame.  
“ Well, they make good their escape to Russia ;  
“ where, if Juan’s passion cools, and I don’t know  
“ what to do with the lady, I shall make her die  
“ of the plague. There are accounts enough of  
“ the plague to be met with, from Boccaccio to De  
“ Foe ;—but I have seen it myself, and that is  
“ worth all their descriptions. As our hero can’t  
“ do without a mistress, he shall next become  
“ man-mistress to Catherine the Great. Queens  
“ have had strange fancies for more ignoble  
“ people before and since. I shall, therefore,  
“ make him cut out the ancestor of the young  
“ Russian, and shall send him, when he is *hors*  
“ *de combat*, to England as her ambassador. In  
“ his suite he shall have a girl whom he shall have  
“ rescued during one of his northern campaigns,  
“ who shall be in love with him, and he not with  
“ her.

“ You see I am true to Nature in making the  
“ advances come from the females. I shall next  
“ draw a town and country life at home, which  
“ will give me room for life, manners, scenery, etc.  
“ I will make him neither a dandy in town nor a  
“ fox-hunter in the country. He shall get into  
“ all sorts of scrapes, and at length end his career  
“ in France. Poor Juan shall be guillotined in  
“ the French Revolution! What do you think of  
“ my plot? It shall have twenty-four books too,  
“ the legitimate number. Episodes it has, and  
“ will have, out of number; and my spirits,  
“ good or bad, must serve for the machinery.  
“ If that be not an epic, if it be not strictly  
“ according to Aristotle, I don’t know what an  
“ epic poem means.”

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“ Murray,” said he, “ pretends to have lost  
“ money by my writings, and pleads poverty; but  
“ if he is poor, which is somewhat problematical  
“ to me, pray who is to blame? The fault is  
“ in his having purchased, at the instance of  
“ his great friends, during the last year, so many

“ expensive Voyages and Travels,\* which all his  
“ influence with ‘The Quarterly’ cannot per-  
“ suade people to buy, cannot puff into popu-  
“ larity. The Cookery-book (which he has got  
“ a lawsuit about) has been for a long time his  
“ sheet-anchor; but they say he will have to  
“ re-fund—the worst of *funds*. Mr. Murray is  
“ tender of my fame! How kind in him! He  
“ is afraid of my writing too fast. Why? because  
“ he has a tenderer regard for his own pocket,  
“ and does not like the look of any new acquain-  
“ tance, in the shape of a book of mine, till  
“ he has seen his old friends in a variety of new  
“ faces; *id est*, disposed of a vast many editions  
“ of the former works. I don’t know what would  
“ become of me without Douglas Kinnaird, who  
“ has always been my best and kindest friend.  
“ It is not easy to deal with Mr. Murray.

“ Murray offered me, of his own accord, 1000*l*.

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\* “ Death to his publisher—to him ’tis sport.”

*Don Juan*, Canto V. Stanza 52.

“ a Canto for ‘Don Juan,’ and afterwards reduced  
“ it to 500*l.* on the plea of piracy, and complained  
“ of my dividing one Canto into two, because  
“ I happened to say something at the end of the  
“ Third about having done so. It is true enough  
“ that ‘Don Juan’ has been pirated; but whom  
“ has he to thank but himself? In the first place,  
“ he put too high a price on the copies of the  
“ first two Cantos that came out, only printing  
“ a quarto edition, at, I think, a guinea and  
“ a half. There was a great demand for it, and  
“ this induced the knavish booksellers to *buc-*  
“ *caneer*. If he had put John Murray on the  
“ title-page, like a man, instead of smuggling the  
“ brat into the world, and getting Davison, who is  
“ a printer and not a publisher, to father it, who  
“ would have ventured to question his paternal  
“ rights? or who would have attempted to de-  
“ prive him of them? .

“ The thing was plainly this: he disowned and  
“ refused to acknowledge the bantling; the na-  
“ tural consequence was, that others should come  
“ forward to adopt it. Mr. John Murray is the

“ most nervous of God’s booksellers. When  
“ ‘Don Juan’ first came out, he was so frightened  
“ that he made a precipitate retreat into the  
“ country, shut himself up, and would not open  
“ his letters. The fact is, he prints for too many  
“ Bishops. He is always boring me with piratical  
“ edition after edition, to prove the amount of  
“ his own losses, and furnish proof of the extent  
“ of his own folly. Here is one at two-and-six-  
“ pence that came only yesterday. I do not pity  
“ him. Because I gave him one of my poems, he  
“ wanted to make me believe that I had made  
“ him a present of two others, and hinted at some  
“ lines in ‘English Bards’ that were certainly  
“ to the point. But I have altered my mind con-  
“ siderably upon that subject: as I once hinted  
“ to him, I see no reason why a man should not  
“ profit by the sweat of his brain, as well as  
“ that of his brow, etc.; besides, I was poor  
“ at that time, and have no idea of aggrandizing  
“ booksellers. I was in Switzerland when he  
“ made this modest request,—and he always en-  
“ tertained a spite against Shelley for making the  
“ agreement, and fixing the price, which I believe

“ was not dear, for the Third Canto of ‘Childe  
“ Harold,’ ‘Manfred,’ and ‘The Prisoner of Chil-  
“ lon,’ etc. — I got 2400*l*. Depend on it, he  
“ did not lose money—he was not ruined by that  
“ speculation.

“ Murray has long prevented ‘The Quarterly’  
“ from abusing me. Some of its bullies have had  
“ their fingers itching to be at me; but they  
“ would get the worst of it in a set-to.” (Here  
he put himself in a boxing attitude.) “ I perceive,  
“ however, that we shall have some sparring ere  
“ long. I don’t wish to quarrel with Murray,  
“ but it seems inevitable. I had no reason to be  
“ pleased with him the other day. Galignani  
“ wrote to me, offering to purchase the copyright  
“ of my works, in order to obtain an exclusive  
“ privilege of printing them in France. I might  
“ have made my own terms, and put the money  
“ in my own pocket; instead of which, I enclosed  
“ Galignani’s letter to Murray, in order that he  
“ might conclude the matter as he pleased. He  
“ did so, very advantageously for his own in-  
“ terest; but never had the complaisance, the



“ common politeness, to thank me, or acknow-  
 “ ledge my letter. My differences with Murray  
 “ are not over. When he purchased ‘Cain,’  
 “ ‘The Two Foscari,’ and ‘Sardanapalus,’ he sent  
 “ me a deed, which you may remember witness-  
 “ ing. Well: after its return to England, it  
 “ was discovered that                   \*                   \*                   \*  
                  \*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*  
                  \*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*  
                  \*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*  
 “ But I shall take no notice of it.”

Some time afterwards he said :

“ Murray and I have made up our quarrel ; at  
 “ least, it is not my fault if it should be renewed.  
 “ The Parsons have been at him about ‘Cain.’  
 “ An Oxonian has addressed a bullying letter to  
 “ him, asking him how so moral a bookseller can  
 “ stain his press with so profane a book? He is  
 “ threatened with a prosecution by the *Anti-*  
 “ *constitutional* Society. I don’t believe they will  
 “ venture to attack him : if they do, I shall go  
 “ home and make my own defence.”

Lord Byron wrote the same day the letter contained in the notes on 'Cain.' Some months afterwards he said in a letter :

" Murray and I have dissolved all connection.  
" He had the choice of giving up me or the ' Navy  
" Lists.' There was no hesitation which way he  
" should decide : the Admiralty carried the day.  
" Now for ' The Quarterly : ' their batteries will  
" be opened ; but I can fire broadsides too. They  
" have been letting off lots of squibs and crackers  
" against me, but they only make a noise and \*\*\*"

In a letter dated from Genoa, the 5th of May, 1823, he says :

" ' Werner ' was the last book Murray pub-  
" lished for me, and three months after came  
" out the Quarterly's article on my plays, when  
" ' Marino Faliero ' was noticed for the first  
" time," etc.

" I need not say that I shall be delighted by  
" your inscribing your ' Wanderer ' to me ; but

“ I would recommend you to think twice before  
“ you inscribe a work to *me*, as you must be  
“ aware that at present I am the most unpopular  
“ writer going,\* and the odium on the dedicatee  
“ may recur on the dedicator. If you do not  
“ think this a valid objection, of course there  
“ can be none on my part,” etc.

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On my speaking to him with great praise one day of Coleridge’s ‘Ancient Mariner,’ Lord Byron said :

“ I have been much taken to task for calling  
“ ‘Christabel’ a wild and singularly original and  
“ beautiful poem ; and the Reviewers very sagely  
“ come to a conclusion therefrom, that I am no  
“ judge of the compositions of others. ‘Chris-  
“ tabel’ was the origin of all Scott’s metrical  
“ tales, and that is no small merit. It was

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\* “ But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero

“ My Leipsic, and my Mont St. Jean seems Cain.”

*Don Juan*, Canto X. Stanza 56.

“ written in 1795, and had a pretty general cir-  
“ culation in the literary world, though it was  
“ not published till 1816, and then probably in  
“ consequence of my advice. One day, when  
“ I was with Walter Scott (now many years ago),  
“ he repeated the whole of ‘Christabel,’ and I  
“ then agreed with him in thinking this poem  
“ what I afterwards called it. Sir Walter Scott  
“ recites admirably. I was rather disappointed  
“ when I saw it in print; but still there are  
“ finer things in it than in any tale of its length;  
“ the proof of which is, that people retain them  
“ without effort.

“ What do you think of the picture of an  
“ English October day?

“ ‘There is not wind enough to twirl  
“ The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
“ That dances as long as dance it can,  
“ Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
“ On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.’

“ Some eight or ten lines of ‘Christa-

“ bel’\* found themselves in ‘The Siege of Corinth,’  
“ I hardly know how ; but I adopted another pas-  
“ sage, of greater beauty, as a motto to a little  
“ work I need not name,† and paraphrased without  
“ scruple the same idea in ‘Childe Harold.’ I  
“ thought it good because I felt it deeply—the  
“ best test of poetry. His psychological poem  
“ was always a great favourite of mine, and but  
“ for me would not have appeared. What perfect  
“ harmony of versification !”

And he began spouting ‘Kubla Khan :’

“ ‘It was an Abyssinian maid,  
“ And on her dulcimer she play’d,  
“ Singing of Mount-Abora’—

“ Madame de Staël was fond of reciting poetry

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\* “ Was it the wind through some hollow stone,  
“ Sent that soft and tender moan ?  
“ He lifted his head—” etc.

*Siege of Corinth.*

† The stanzas beginning “Fare thee well !”

“ that had hardly any thing but its music to recommend it.”

“ And pray,” asked I, “ what has ‘ Kubla Khan ? ’ ”

“ I can’t tell you,” said he ; “ but it delights me.”

And he went on till he had finished the Vision.

“ I was very much amused with Coleridge’s ‘ ‘ Memoirs.’ There is a great deal of *Bonhommie* in that book, and he does not spare himself. Nothing, to me at least, is so entertaining as a work of this kind—as private biography : ‘ Hamilton’s Memoirs,’ for instance, that were the origin of the style of Voltaire. Madame de Staël used to say, that ‘ De Grammont’ was a book containing, with less matter, more interest than any she knew. Alfieri’s ‘ Life’ is delightful. You will see my Confessions in good time, and you will wonder at two things—that I should have had so much to confess, and that I

“ should have confessed so much. Coleridge,  
“ too, seems sensible enough of his own errors.  
“ His sonnet to the Moon is an admirable bur-  
“ lesque on the *Lakists*, and his own style. Some  
“ of his stories are told with a vast deal of  
“ humour, and display a fund of good temper  
“ that all his disappointments could not sour.  
“ Many parts of his ‘Memoirs’ are quite unin-  
“ telligible, and were, I apprehend, meant for  
“ Kant; on the proper pronounciation of whose  
“ name I heard a long argument the other  
“ evening.

“ Coleridge is like Sosia in ‘Amphytrion;’—he  
“ does not know whether he is himself, or not.  
“ If he had never gone to Germany, nor spoilt  
“ his fine genius by the transcendental philo-  
“ sophy and German metaphysics, nor taken to  
“ write lay sermons, he would have made the  
“ greatest poet of the day. What poets had we  
“ in 1795? Hayley had got a monopoly, such as  
“ it was. Coleridge might have been any thing :  
“ as it is, he is a thing ‘that dreams are made of.’”

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Being one day at Moloni's, the bookseller at Pisa, a report was in circulation that a subject belonging to the Lucchese States had been taken up for sacrilege, and sentenced to be burnt alive. A priest who entered the library at that moment confirmed the news, and expressed himself thus:—" *Scelerato!*" said he, " he took the consecrated wafers off the altar, and threw them contemptuously about the church! What punishment can be great enough for such a monstrous crime? Burning is too easy a death! I shall go to Lucca,—I would almost go to Spain,—to see the wretch expire at the stake!" Such were the humane and Christian sentiments of a minister of the Gospel! I quitted him with disgust, and immediately hastened to Lord Byron's.

" Is it possible?" said he, after he had heard my story. " Can we believe that we live in the nineteenth century? However, I can believe any thing of the Duchess of Lucca. She is an Infanta of Spain, a bigot in religion, and of course advocates the laws of the Inquisition: But it is scarcely credible that she will venture



“ to put them into effect here. We must endeavour to prevent this *auto da fé*. Lord Guilford is arrived:—we will get him to use his influence. Surely the Grand Duke of Tuscany will interfere, for he has himself never signed a death-warrant since he came upon the throne.”

Shelley entered at this moment horror-struck: he had just heard that the criminal was to suffer the next day. He proposed that we should mount and arm ourselves as well as we could, set off immediately for Lucca, and endeavour to rescue the prisoner when brought out for execution, making at full speed for the Tuscan frontiers, where he would be safe. Mad and hopeless as the scheme was, Lord Byron consented, carried away by his feelings, to join in it, if other means should fail. We agreed to meet again in the evening, and in the mean time to get a petition signed by all the English residents at Pisa, to be presented to the Grand Duke.

“ I will myself,” said he, “ write immediately to Lord Guilford. ”

He did so, and received an answer a few hours after, telling him that the same report had reached Lord Guilford; but that he had learned, on investigation, that it was unfounded.

It appeared that the Duchess had issued a proclamation which made the peasant amenable, when apprehended, to the ancient laws of Spain; but that he had escaped to Florence and given himself up to the police, who had stipulated not to make him over to the authorities at Lucca, but on condition of his being tried by the Tuscan laws.

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Speaking of Coppet and Madame de Staël, he said:

“ I knew Madame de Staël in England. When  
“ she came over she created a great sensation,  
“ and was much courted in the literary as well as  
“ the political world. On the supposition of her  
“ being a liberal, she was invited to a party,  
“ where were present Whitbread, Sheridan, and  
“ several of the Opposition leaders.

“To the great horror of the former, she soon sported her *Ultraisms*. No one possessed so little tact as Madame de Staël,—which is astonishing in one who had seen so much of the world and of society. She used to assemble at her routs politicians of both sides of the House, and was fond of setting two party-men by the ears in argument. I once witnessed a curious scene of this kind. She was battling it very warmly, as she used to do, with Canning, and all at once turned round to (I think he said) Lord Grey, who was at his elbow, for his opinion. It was on some point upon which he could not but most cordially disagree. She did not understand London society, and was always sighing for her *coterie* at Paris. The dandies took an invincible dislike to the De Staëls, mother and daughter. Brummel was her aversion;—she, his. There was a double marriage talked of in town that season :—Auguste (the present Baron) was to have married Miss Millbank; I the present Duchess of Broglie. I could not have been worse *embroiled*.

“Madame de Staël had great talent in conversation, and an overpowering flow of words. It was once said of a large party that were all trying to shine, ‘There is not one who can go home and think.’ This was not the case with her. She was often troublesome, some thought rude, in her questions; but she never offended me, because I knew that her inquisitiveness did not proceed from idle curiosity, but from a wish to sound people’s characters. She was a continual interrogatory to me, in order to fathom mine, which requires a long plumb line. She once asked me if my real character was well drawn in a favourite novel of the day (‘Glenarvon’). She was only singular in putting the question in the dry way she did. There are many who pin their faith on that insincere production.

“No woman had so much *bonne foi* as Madame de Staël: hers was a real kindness of heart. She took the greatest possible interest in my quarrel with Lady Byron, or rather Lady Byron’s with me, and had some influence over my wife,—as much as any person but her mother, which is

“ not saying much. I believe Madame de Staël did  
“ her utmost to bring about a reconciliation  
“ between us. She was the best creature in the  
“ world.

“ Women never see consequences—never look  
“ at things straight forward, or as they ought. Like  
“ figurantes at the Opera, they make a hundred  
“ *pirouettes* and return to where they set out.  
“ With Madame de Staël this was sometimes the  
“ case. She was very indefinite and vague in her  
“ manner of expression. In endeavouring to be  
“ new she became often obscure, and sometimes  
“ unintelligible. What did she mean by saying  
“ that ‘ Napoleon was a system, and not a man?’

“ I cannot believe that Napoleon was acquainted  
“ with all the petty persecutions that she used to  
“ be so garrulous about, or that he deemed her  
“ of sufficient importance to be dangerous: besides  
“ she admired him so much, that he might have  
“ gained her over by a word. But, like me, he  
“ had perhaps too great a contempt for women;  
“ he treated them as puppets, and thought he

“ could make them dance at any time by pulling  
“ the wires. That story of ‘ *Gardez vos enfans* ’  
“ did not tell much in her favour, and proves  
“ what I say. I shall be curious to see Las Cases’  
“ book, to hear what Napoleon’s real conduct to  
“ her was.”

I told him I could never reconcile the contradictory opinions he had expressed of Napoleon in his poems.

“ How could it be otherwise?” said he. “ Some  
“ of them were called translations, and I spoke in  
“ the character of a Frenchman and a soldier. But  
“ Napoleon was his own antithesis (if I may say  
“ so). He was a glorious tyrant, after all. Look  
“ at his public works ; compare his face, even on  
“ his coins, with those of the other sovereigns of  
“ Europe. I blame the manner of his death : he  
“ shewed that he possessed much of the Italian  
“ character in consenting to live. There he lost  
“ himself in his dramatic character, in my estimation.  
“ He was master of his own destiny ; of  
“ that, at least, his enemies could not deprive

“ him. He should have gone off the stage like a  
“ hero : it was expected of him.

“ Madame de Staël, as an historian, should have  
“ named him in her ‘ *Allemagne* ; ’ she was wrong  
“ in suppressing his name, and he had a right to  
“ be offended. Not that I mean to justify his per-  
“ secutions. These, I cannot help thinking, must  
“ have arisen indirectly from some private enemy.  
“ But we shall see.

“ She was always aiming to be brilliant—to pro-  
“ duce a sensation, no matter how, when, or  
“ where. She wanted to make all her ideas, like  
“ figures in the modern French school of paint-  
“ ing, prominent and showy,—standing out of the  
“ canvass, each in a light of its own. She was  
“ vain ; but who had an excuse for vanity if she  
“ had not? I can easily conceive her not wishing  
“ to change her name, or acknowledge that of  
“ Rocca. I liked Rocca ; he was a gentleman and  
“ a clever man ; no one said better things, or with  
“ a better grace. The remark about the Meillerie  
“ road that I quoted in the Notes of ‘ *Childe Ha-*

“ rold,’ ‘ *La route vaut mieux que les souvenirs,*’  
“ was the observation of a thorough French-  
“ man.”

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“ Here is a letter I have had to-day,” said he.  
“ The writer is a stranger to me, and pleads  
“ great distress. He says he has been an of-  
“ ficer in the East India service, and makes out  
“ a long list of grievances against the Com-  
“ pany and a Mr. S——. He charges the govern-  
“ ment with sending him home without a trial,  
“ and breaking him without a Court-martial ;  
“ and complains that a travelling gentleman,  
“ after having engaged him as an interpreter to  
“ accompany him to Persia, and put him to great  
“ expense in preparations for the journey, has  
“ all at once changed his mind, and refused  
“ to remunerate him for his lost time, or pay  
“ him any of the annual stipend he had fixed  
“ to give him. His name seems to be —— . You  
“ have been at Bombay,—do you know him ?”

“ No,” answered I ; “ but I know his story.



He was thought to have been hardly used. As to the other part of his complaint, I know nothing."

"He asks me for 50*l.* I shall send it him by to-morrow's post: there is no courier to-day."

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"Who would not wish to have been born two or three centuries later?" said he, putting into my hand an Italian letter. "Here is a *sa-*  
*vant* of Bologna, who pretends to have discovered the manner of directing balloons by means of a rudder, and tells me that he is ready to explain the nature of his invention to our Government. I suppose we shall soon travel by air-vessels; make air instead of sea-voyages; and at length find our way to the moon, in spite of the want of atmosphere."\*

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\* "Steam-engines will convey him to the moon."

“ *Cœlum ipsum petimus stultitiâ,*” said I.

“ There is not so much folly as you may suppose, and a vast deal of poetry, in the idea,” replied Lord Byron. “ Where shall we set bounds to the power of steam? Who shall say, ‘ Thus far thou shalt go, and no farther?’ We are at present in the infancy of science. Do you imagine that, in former stages of this planet, wiser creatures than ourselves did not exist? All our boasted inventions are but the shadows of what has been,—the dim images of the past—the dream of other states of existence. Might not the fable of Prometheus, and his stealing the fire, and of Briareus and his earth-born brothers, be but traditions of steam and its machinery? Who knows whether, when a comet shall approach this globe to destroy it, as it often has been and will be destroyed, men will not tear rocks from their foundations by means of steam, and hurl mountains, as the giants are said to have done, against the flaming mass?—and then we shall

“ have traditions of Titans again, and of wars  
“ with Heaven.”

“ A mighty ingenious theory,” said I laughing,—and was near adding, in the words of  
‘ Julian and Maddalo :’

“ The sense that he was greater than his kind  
Had made, methinks, his eagle spirit blind  
With gazing on its own exceeding light.”

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Talking of romances, he said :

“ ‘ The Monk’ is perhaps one of the best in  
“ any language, not excepting the German. It  
“ only wanted one thing, as I told Lewis, to  
“ have rendered it perfect. He should have made  
“ the demon really in love with Ambrosio : this  
“ would have given it a human interest. ‘ The  
“ Monk’ was written when Lewis was only  
“ twenty, and he seems to have exhausted all  
“ his genius on it. Perhaps at that age he was  
“ in earnest in his belief of magic wonders.

“ That is the secret of Walter Scott’s inspira-  
“ tion : he retains and encourages all the su-  
“ perstitions of his youth. Lewis caught *his* pas-  
“ sion for the marvellous, and it amounted to  
“ a mania with him, in Germany ; but the  
“ groundwork of ‘The Monk’ is neither origi-  
“ nal nor German : it is derived from the tale of  
“ ‘Santon Barsisa.’ The episode of ‘The Bleed-  
“ ing Nun,’ which was turned into a melo-  
“ drama, is from the German.

“ There were two stories which he almost  
“ believed by telling. One happened to himself  
“ whilst he was residing at Manheim. Every  
“ night, at the same hour, he heard or thought  
“ he heard in his room, when he was lying in  
“ bed, a crackling noise like that produced by  
“ parchment, or thick paper. This circumstance  
“ caused inquiry, when it was told him that the  
“ sounds were attributable to the following cause :  
“ —The house in which he lived had belonged to  
“ a widow, who had an only son. In order to  
“ prevent his marrying a poor but amiable girl,  
“ to whom he was attached, he was sent to sea.

“ Years passed, and the mother heard no tidings  
“ of him, nor the ship in which he had sailed.  
“ It was supposed that the vessel had been  
“ wrecked, and that all on board had perished.  
“ The reproaches of the girl, the upbraidings of  
“ her own conscience, and the loss of her child,  
“ crazed the old lady’s mind, and her only pursuit  
“ became to turn over the Gazettes for news.  
“ Hope at length left her : she did not live long,  
“ —and continued her old occupation after death.

“ The other story that I alluded to before, was  
“ the original of his ‘Alonzo and Imogene,’ which  
“ has had such a host of imitators. Two Flo-  
“ rentine lovers, who had been attached to each  
“ other almost from childhood, made a vow of  
“ eternal fidelity. Mina was the name of the  
“ lady—her husband’s I forget, but it is not ma-  
“ terial. They parted. He had been for some  
“ time absent with his regiment, when, as his  
“ disconsolate lady was sitting alone in her  
“ chamber, she distinctly heard the well-known  
“ sound of his footsteps, and starting up beheld,  
“ not her husband, but his spectre, with a deep

“ ghastly wound across his forehead, entering.  
“ She swooned with horror : when she recovered,  
“ the ghost told her that in future his visits  
“ should be announced by a passing-bell, and  
“ these words, distinctly whispered, ‘ Mina, I am  
“ here !’ Their interviews now became frequent,  
“ till the woman fancied herself as much in love  
“ with the ghost as she had been with the man.  
“ But it was soon to prove otherwise. One fatal  
“ night she went to a ball :—what business had  
“ she there ? She danced too ; and, what was  
“ worse, her partner was a young Florentine, so  
“ much the counterpart of her lover, that she  
“ became estranged from his ghost. Whilst the  
“ young gallant conducted her in the waltz, and  
“ her ear drank in the music of his voice and  
“ words, a passing-bell tolled ! She had been  
“ accustomed to the sound till it hardly excited  
“ her attention, and now lost in the attractions of  
“ her fascinating partner, she heard but regarded  
“ it not. A second peal !—she listened not to  
“ its warnings. A third time the bell, with its  
“ deep and iron tongue, startled the assembled  
“ company, and silenced the music ! Mina then

“ turned her eyes from her partner, and saw reflected in the mirror, a form, a shadow, a spectre : it was her husband ! He was standing between her and the young Florentine, and whispered in a solemn and melancholy tone the accustomed accents, ‘ Mina, I am here ! ’ —She instantly fell dead.

“ Lewis was not a very successful writer. His ‘ Monk ’ was abused furiously by Matthias, in his ‘ Pursuits of Literature,’ and he was forced to suppress it. ‘ Abellino ’ he merely translated. ‘ Pizarro ’ was a sore subject with him, and no wonder that he winced at the name. Sheridan, who was not very scrupulous about applying to himself *literary* property at least, manufactured his play without so much as an acknowledgment, pecuniary or otherwise, from Lewis’s ideas ; and bad as ‘ Pizarro ’ is, I know (from having been on the Drury-Lane Committee, and knowing, consequently, the comparative profits of plays,) that it brought in more money than any other play has ever done, or perhaps ever will do.

“ But to return to Lewis. He was even worse  
“ treated about ‘ The Castle Spectre,’ which had  
“ also an immense run, a prodigious success.  
“ Sheridan never gave him any of its profits either.  
“ One day Lewis being in company with him, said,  
“ —‘ Sheridan, I will make you a large bet.’  
“ Sheridan, who was always ready to make a  
“ wager, (however he might find it inconvenient  
“ to pay it if lost,) asked eagerly what bet? ‘ All  
“ the profits of my Castle Spectre,’ replied Lewis.  
“ ‘ I will tell you what,’ said Sheridan, (who never  
“ found his match at repartee,) ‘ I will make you  
“ a very small one,—what it is worth.’ ”

I asked him if he had known Sheridan ?

“ Yes,” said he. “ Sheridan was an extraor-  
“ dinary compound of contradictions, and Moore  
“ will be much puzzled in reconciling them for  
“ the Life he is writing. The upper part of She-  
“ ridan’s face was that of a God—a forehead most  
“ expansive, an eye of peculiar brilliancy and fire ;  
“ but below he shewed the satyr.



“ Lewis was a pleasant companion, and would  
“ always have remained a boy in spirits and man-  
“ ners—(unlike me !) He was fond of the society  
“ of younger men than himself. I myself never  
“ knew a man, except Shelley, who was compa-  
“ nionable till thirty. I remember Mrs. Pope  
“ once asking who was Lewis’s male-love this  
“ season ! He possessed a very lively imagination,  
“ and a great turn for narrative, and had a world  
“ of ghost-stories, which he had better have con-  
“ fined himself to telling. His poetry is now al-  
“ most forgotten : it will be the same with that of  
“ all but two or three poets of the day.

“ Lewis had been, or thought he had been,  
“ unkind to a brother whom he lost young ; and  
“ when any thing disagreeable was about to hap-  
“ pen to him, the vision of his brother appeared :  
“ he came as a sort of monitor.

“ Lewis was with me for a considerable period  
“ at Geneva ; and we went to Coppet several  
“ times together ; but Lewis was there oftener  
“ than I.

“ Madame de Staël and he used to have violent  
“ arguments about the Slave Trade,—which he  
“ advocated strongly, for most of his property  
“ was in negroes and plantations. Not being  
“ satisfied with three thousand a-year, he wanted  
“ to make it five; and would go to the West  
“ Indies; but he died on the passage of sea-  
“ sickness, and obstinacy in taking an emetic.”

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I said to him, “ You are accused of owing a  
great deal to Wordsworth. Certainly there are  
some stanzas in the Third Canto of ‘ Childe Ha-  
rold’ that smell strongly of the Lakes: for in-  
stance—

“ I live not in myself, but I become  
Portion of that around me; —and to me  
High mountains are a feeling!”

“ Very possibly,” replied he. “ Shelley, when  
“ I was in Switzerland, used to dose me with  
“ Wordsworth physic even to nausea: and I do  
“ remember then reading some things of his with

“ pleasure. He had once a feeling of Nature,  
“ which he carried almost to a deification of it :—  
“ that’s why Shelley liked his poetry.

“ It is satisfactory to reflect, that where a man  
“ becomes a hireling and loses his mental in-  
“ dependence, he loses also the faculty of writing  
“ well. The Lyrical Ballads, jacobinical and pul-  
“ ing with affectation of simplicity as they were,  
“ had undoubtedly a certain merit :\* and Words-  
“ worth, though occasionally a writer for the  
“ nursery-masters and misses,

‘ Who took their little porringer,  
And ate their porridge there,’

“ now and then expressed ideas worth imitating ;  
“ but, like brother Southey, he had his price ;  
“ and since he is turned tax-gatherer, is only fit  
“ to rhyme about lasses and waggoners. Shelley

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\* “ Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who *then*  
“ Season’d his pedlar poems with democracy.”

*Don Juan*, Canto III. Stanza 93.

“ repeated to me the other day a stanza from  
“ ‘ Peter Bell’ that I thought inimitably good.  
“ It is the rumination of Peter’s ass, who gets into  
“ a brook, and sees reflected there a family-circle,  
“ or tea-party. But you shall have it in his own  
“ words :

“ ‘ Is it a party in a parlour,  
Cramm’d just as you on earth are cramm’d ?  
Some sipping punch, some supping tea,  
And every one, as you may see,  
All silent and all d——d ! ’

“ There was a time when he would have  
“ written better ; but perhaps Peter thinks feel-  
“ ingly.

“ The republican trio, when they began to  
“ publish in common, were to have had a com-  
“ munity of all things, like the ancient Britons ;  
“ to have lived in a state of nature, like savages,  
“ and peopled some ‘ island of the blest’ with  
“ children in common, like —— . A very pretty  
“ Arcadian notion ! It amuses me much to com-  
“ pare the Botany Bay Eclogue, the Panegyric of

“ Martin the Regicide, and ‘ Wat Tyler,’ with the  
“ Laureate Odes, and Peter’s Eulogium on the  
“ Field of Waterloo. There is something more  
“ than rhyme in that noted stanza containing

‘ Yea, slaughter  
Is God’s daughter !’ \*—

“ I offended the *par nobile* mortally,—past all  
“ hope of forgiveness—many years ago. I met,  
“ at the Cumberland Lakes, Hogg the Ettrick  
“ Shepherd, who had just been writing ‘ The  
“ Poetic Mirror,’ a work that contains imitations  
“ of all the living poets’ styles, after the manner  
“ of ‘ Rejected Addresses.’ The burlesque is well  
“ done, particularly that of me, but not equal to  
“ Horace Smith’s. I was pleased with Hogg ;  
“ and he wrote me a very witty letter, to which  
“ I sent him, I suspect, a very dull reply. Certain  
“ it is that I did not spare the Lakists in it ; and  
“ he told me he could not resist the temptation,  
“ and had shewn it to the fraternity. It was too

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\* Wordsworth’s Thanksgiving Ode.

“ tempting; and as I could never keep a secret  
“ of my own, as you know, much less that of  
“ other people, I could not blame him. I re-  
“ member saying, among other things, that the  
“ Lake poets were such fools as not to fish in  
“ their own waters; but this was the least of-  
“ fensive part of the epistle.”

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“ Bowles is one of the same little order of  
“ spirits, who has been fussily fishing on for fame,  
“ and is equally waspish and jealous. What  
“ could Coleridge mean by praising his poetry as  
“ he does?

“ It was a mistake of mine, about his making  
“ the woods of Madeira tremble, etc.; but it  
“ seems that I might have told him that there  
“ were no *woods* to make tremble with kisses,  
“ which would have been quite as great a blunder.

“ I met Bowles once at Rogers’s, and thought  
“ him a pleasant, gentlemanly man—a good  
“ fellow, for a parson. When men meet to-

“ gether after dinner, the conversation takes a  
“ certain turn. I remember he entertained us  
“ with some good stories. The reverend gentle-  
“ man pretended, however, to be much shocked  
“ at Pope’s letters to Martha Blount.

“ I set him and his invariable principles at rest.  
“ He did attempt an answer, which was no reply ;  
“ at least, nobody read it. I believe he applied  
“ to me some lines in Shakspeare.\* A man is  
“ very unlucky who has a name that can be  
“ punned upon ; and his own did not escape.

“ I have been reading ‘Johnson’s Lives,’ a  
“ book I am very fond of. I look upon him as  
“ the profoundest of critics, and had occasion to  
“ study him when I was writing to Bowles.

“ Of all the disgraces that attach to England in  
“ the eye of foreigners, who admire Pope more  
“ than any of our poets, (though it is the fashion

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\* “ I do remember thee, my Lord Byron,” etc.

“ to under-rate him among ourselves,) the greatest  
 “ perhaps is, that there should be no place as-  
 “ signed to him in Poets’ Corner. I have often  
 “ thought of erecting a monument to him at my  
 “ own expense, in Westminster Abbey; and hope  
 “ to do so yet. But he was a Catholic, and, what  
 “ was worse, puzzled Tillotson and the Divines.  
 “ That accounts for his not having any national  
 “ monument. Milton, too, had very nearly been  
 “ without a stone; and the mention of his name  
 “ on the tomb of another was at one time con-  
 “ sidered a profanation to a church. The French,  
 “ I am told, lock up Voltaire’s tomb. Will there  
 “ never be an end to this bigotry? Will men  
 “ never learn that every great poet is necessarily  
 “ a religious man?—so at least Coleridge says.”

“ Yes,” replied Shelley; “ and he might main-  
 tain the converse,—that every truly religious  
 man is a poet; meaning by poetry the power of  
 communicating intense and impassioned impres-  
 sions respecting man and Nature.”









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